

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

Winter
(July–September) 1997, no. 65
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Established 1981

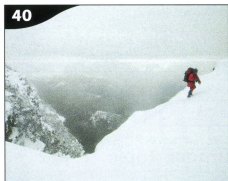
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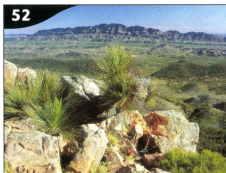
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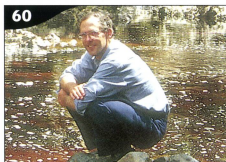
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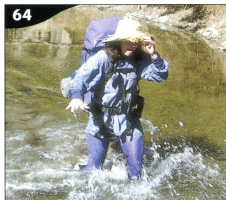
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Winter
(July–September) 1997
Issue 65
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WARNING

The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.

Cover Lisa and Stuart Imer on the North Rams Head, Mt Kosciuszko area, New South Wales. *Gleyn Tempest*

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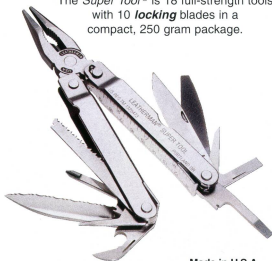
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The wild person

A reflection on the value of wilderness



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misleading material.

I doubt whether you would be reading *Wild* if you weren't already familiar with what follows. I write about what wilderness ('the bush', 'natural places'; call it what you will) means to me and, I suspect, to all of us whether we realise it or not.

From a very young age I've had an affinity for the landscape in general and for wild places in particular, especially when they are also high, Australian places. My parents' strong interest in such localities obviously played a role in fanning the glowing embers of my own interest into what had become a passion by the time I was in my early teens. But the depth of that passion cannot be explained solely in terms of parental example. Quite early I came to the conclusion that my very being seemed to require regular contact with the natural world. I needed to experience the eucalypt cathedrals, the blue hills and the far, hazy horizons over and again. I realised that I had an insatiable yearning to learn their secrets, to see over the next ridge and to walk in the next valley.

As I indulged this need in an orgy of teenage bushwalking I remember wondering how my father, then committed to supporting and educating a family of six, could possibly bear to spend so much of his life working long hours in his city office far removed from his beloved High Country, particularly when other people were relaxing on weekends. I could only shudder, and return to dreaming of my next mountain foray, or to reliving the last.

The advent of a network of four-wheel-drive, fire-access tracks in Australia's High Country at the start of the 1960s rang alarm bells in my head, especially when these tracks were quickly upgraded to two-wheel-drive logging roads. While recreational four-wheel driving was at that time still a thing of the future, largely unregulated logging soon gutted whole forests leaving sad wastelands in its wake. The speed and extent of this destruction horrified me—it still does. I was left with a conviction that we could lose our entire natural heritage in a mere generation or two and that, somehow, I must do everything in my power to try to prevent this—but what? While one person, and a young one at that, can do only so much against such a powerful and

entrenched array as presented by the development lobby, this was no small factor in the decision to establish *Wild* which, from the outset, has unashamedly and vigorously campaigned for the conservation of Australia's wild places. (This was explained in the brochure distributed in 1981 to announce the imminent publication of the first issue.)

In his wise and wonderful book *Manhood*, Steve Biddulph asks why it is that people love wilderness. He then answers his own question:

'It's because their hearts feed on its existence. To go into those places...and taste the wildness, that is what keeps us sane. It is our connection to God.'

'Yet...', Biddulph observes, this feeling of profound connection 'is the very opposite of what we build around ourselves in the modern world'. He quotes Robert Bly: 'If you are a man, civilisation will kill you.' Biddulph points out the horror with which American Indians observed, and with which Amazon people today view, the toxicity to the white man's soul of his (sub-)urban world.

I know I have never experienced anywhere else the sense of peace, of belonging, of awe and humility or the sense of perspective I find in the bush. These feelings have in no way diminished with age or with my experiences of wild places. If anything, my sense of reverence and of the importance to me of such experience have been heightened. I now know that I can't live without it and I find it difficult to see how anyone can. Certainly, I would dread the possibility of people never having the opportunity to experience it for themselves because such places no longer exist. That would be an unthinkable

sacrilege. ☹

Chris Baxter

Environmental impact statement

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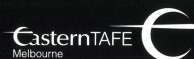
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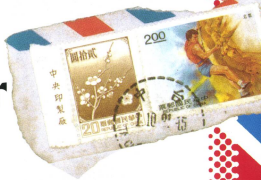
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haunting with Junior

Babes in the woods



I refer to Ken Brodrick's letter in *Wild* no 63. It is good that the activities of hoons in the four-wheel-drive community are being reduced but in the Blue Mountains I still see evidence of new tracks being bashed through the bush by these modern 'pioneers'.

Both the amount of damage done by inconsiderate people and the garbage left by them grow rapidly wherever access is gained by any vehicle. This also applies to the possibility of being hassled by drunks and hoons playing Metallica or Guns 'n' Roses late at night.

As to Mr Brodrick's other point of the lack of families with small children being shown in this magazine, I have not let this put me off buying the magazine—we have used *Wild* to broaden our outlook. My wife and I took up serious bushwalking in our late 30s. Our son was eight when we tackled the Six Foot Track for the first time, and nine when we first walked the Overland Track in Tasmania. Until he was big enough to carry his rucksack any distance, we did as many day walks and car-camping trips as possible. Long bushwalks with small children can be difficult but are not necessarily impossible.

Ralph McIntyre
Leura, NSW

After reading Ken Brodrick's letter in *Wild* no 63 I feel called upon to put pen to paper and give my experience of bushwalking with a family.

I still walk regularly after 25 years of marriage and seven children; we have probably seen most National Parks (well, 75 per cent of them) on the east coast of Australia. I have fond memories of places like Girraween, climbing the Pyramids with one child on my back and one on each hand at a very early age. I don't write this to brag; I'm not particularly fit...

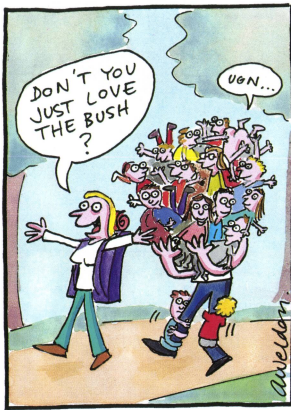
As a family we have enjoyed the bush, the exercise, the peace and quiet, and the wildlife that can only be experienced on foot...

Two of my older daughters are now married and take their husbands and babies walking with them.

Don't think that I am anti-four-wheel-drives—they make a great way of getting to places to walk—but the car is only half of it. There is no wilderness experience unless you get out and see and experience it; with your kids. You might be surprised just how far little ones can walk.

who drive into and through it, and the wilderness fanatic is just as unloved by the four-wheel-drive movement as even the sensible four-wheel-drive driver is unloved by the wilderness fanatic...

Brian Fleming
Ivanhoe, Vic



I also have lots of friends well into their 60s who still walk on a regular basis. Generally they are a healthy, relaxed and peaceful lot. So take a risk, get out and walk, you may love it.

Lawrie Kearney
Family Bushwalking Club
Wynnum West, Qld

...Some of your readers seem to have the idea that we are villains of deepest dye because we *drive* into and through the bush, even though we keep to vehicle tracks and *tread lightly*. How do they get to the start of their expeditions if not by car?...

Unfortunately, extremists exist among both those who love the bush and those

On yer bike

I refer to Jesse Brampton's letter in *Wild* no 64 criticising an advertisement showing mountain bikes on 'a narrow unformed track'.

I would suggest that mountain bikes cause negligible damage to tracks because they are impractical to ride on anything other than fire tracks or firm single tracks.

On the other hand the damage caused by walkers is amply illustrated by the photograph on page 85 of *Wild* no 64, and the photographs on pages 44, 47 and 48 of *Wild* no 59.

Stuart McDougall
Vaucluse, NSW

Grey power

I was interested to read in *Wild* Information (*Wild* no 64) of a group intending to walk the Larpinta Trail in July. I am in a group of six people planning to walk the completed sections (1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12) of the trail, also in July. The ranger said the authorities prefer people not to walk the unfinished sections (4, 5, 6 and 7). We will be walking about 160 kilo-

metres...

Our only help will be transportation between sections 3 and 8. Our ages are 63, 58, 58, 48, 40+ and 41. The three oldest started backpacking five to seven years ago.

We were a little amused that the mentioned trip was written about as being a big effort when they are having a back-up crew.

Bernice Duffield
Lavington, NSW

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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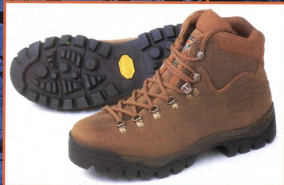


Photo ©Mike Harding

Tiger rescue

Treseder in dramatic Blue Mountains canyon rescue

• Zed for heights

Conscientious bushwalkers will need to hunt out a Biro and their (probably dog-eared) copy of the classic *Kosciuszko* 1:50 000 CMA map due to a recent decision by the New South Wales Geographical Names Board. The spelling of Australia's highest mountain is to change. The new spelling—Mt Kosciuszko—restores a 'z' inadvertently dropped within months of the mountain being named by Polish explorer Paul Edmund Strzelecki. Strzelecki, who is credited with the first ascent of the country's highest peak on 12 March 1840 (although previous ascents had almost certainly been made), named the mountain after a revered Polish patriot, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, whose massive domed tomb Strzelecki thought it resembled.

Although the discrepancy between the old spelling and that of the famous Pole's name has long been recognised, previous proposals to change the name of the mountain were thwarted by the presence of the incorrect spelling in all the earliest documents relating to Strzelecki's discovery. (Strzelecki may even have used the wrong spelling himself on the official map of his expedition, now lost.) But in letters sent by Strzelecki to a friend in Poland—the originals of which were recently made available to the Australian Embassy in Warsaw—the explorer uses the correct spelling as well as describing 'the silence and dignity with which [the mountain] is surrounded' and speaks of Australians as 'a free people, who appreciate freedom...'. So many Australians now express their appreciation of freedom by climbing the mountain that its bleak summit is rarely silent!

Other place names which share the incorrect spelling, including Kosciuszko National Park, are also to change. (*Wild* will, of course, use the new spelling in all references to the mountain and to the park, but book titles, maps and proper names—such as the Kosciuszko Huts Association—will keep the old spelling until each is officially revised.)



• Hut code

The Australian Alps Liaison Committee has released a new code of conduct governing the use of the dozens of huts and emergency shelters scattered throughout the High Country. The code recognises both the fragility of many of the historic shelters and the important role they play as potentially life-saving bolt holes in case of blizzard or other threatening weather.

Skiers and bushwalkers are reminded to conserve the emergency supplies of wood and matches in High Country huts by using fuel stoves (many huts are in fuel-stove-only areas, anyway); sleep in tents even when a hut is vacant; leave any shelter they visit cleaner than it was when they arrived; collect water from upstream of any hut and boil it before use; and be meticulous in their toilet habits (using pit toilets where provided).

Copies of the code are available from National Park visitor offices throughout the Alps; or visit the Australian Alps Liaison Committee web site at <http://www.abca.gov.au/protecte/alps/index.htm>.

A name- (or at least a spelling-) change for Australia's highest summit after more than 150 years. Glenn van der Knijff

• That man again...

After making the first unsupported crossing (with Keith Williams) of the Simpson Desert last year, tiger walker Peter Treseder has traversed the Gibson Desert in Western Australia in the same style—also a first. The crossing—from near the Giles Weather Station at the eastern edge of the Rawlinson Range to the vicinity of Carnegie Station on the desert's western frontier—traversed 500 kilometres of mostly trackless country and took Treseder just under four-and-a-half days. He carried all his food and water in his pack.

Nearing the end of his three-day drive home from WA and after a week with very little sleep Treseder pulled into the Claustal Canyon car park in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, for a much-

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needed doze. Within 30 minutes of nodding off he was woken by the partner of a female canyoneer who had become trapped on the second of Claustral's three waterfalls when her hair and wet suit had jammed in her abseil device. By the time Treseder (a senior member of Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue and an experienced canyoneer)

the Directories should be (08) 8387 3588. The phone number for Timor Country Cottages ('Walk in the Warrumbungles') on page 122 under Accommodation in the Classifieds should be (068) 42 1055. The phone number for Impoex Trading ('Polartec jackets') on the same page under Gear should be (03) 9830 0066.



reached the woman she was almost unconscious from hypothermia, having been trapped in the waterfall for eight hours. After a harrowing rescue the canyoneer was freed and helped back to the car park the following morning. An hour longer in the waterfall and the woman may well have died.

The most extraordinary thing about the incident is not so much the dramatic freeing of the stuck canyoneer as the fact that one of the few people with the experience to perform such a rescue just happened to be sleeping in the nearby car park—he was the only person there—after running across the Gibson Desert and driving across the country for three days!

● Corrections and amplifications

Wild no 64: At the bottom of the first column on page 50 ('Exploring the Capital's Mountain Frontier') the second last sentence should read: '...and Mt Ginini and Mt Gingera of which the flat-topped summit ridge is a distinctive feature of the range...'. The references in the same article to camping at Stockyard Gap and Blackfellow's Gap should not have appeared; camping on the ACT side of Stockyard Gap is not permitted. The phone number for the Queanbeyan National Parks & Wildlife Service is (06) 297 6144. The phone number for Nature Trek South Australia listed on page 121 under Adventure Activities in

Tiger rescuer extraordinaire Peter Treseder on the eastern edge of the Gibson Desert, Western Australia, at the start of his crossing. *Treseder collection*

NEW SOUTH WALES

● Training conference

'Nature for sale: the outdoor industry's dilemma in education and training' is the theme of a conference to be held under the auspices of the University of Technology (Sydney) on 13–15 July. The conference, which is ratified by the World Leisure and Recreation Association, will investigate the relationships between ecotourism, government and the environment, with particular focus on training and accreditation issues. If you wish to participate, contact the conference convener, Stephen Wearing, School of Leisure and Tourism Studies, University of Technology (Sydney), PO Box 222, Lindfield, NSW 2070; email S.Wearing@uts.edu.au.

VICTORIA

● SOTA to move

After 12 years in Canberra the Snow & Outdoor Trade Show is set to move to Melbourne. The only trade show dedicated to the Australian outdoors industry, SOTA

Wild Diary

Information about rucksack sports events for publication in this department should be sent to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

June

21	6-hr R	Vic	(03) 9890 4352
21–22	24-hr R	WA	(08) 9275 4734

July

5–6	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
12–13	Advanced river rescue C	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
19–20	Basic skills instructor assessment C	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
	24-hour Australian Championships (Flinders Ranges) R	SA	(08) 8364 4390
26	Hotham to Dinner Plain S	Vic	(03) 9398 0316
26–27	Winter Classic M	Vic	(03) 9897 3536

August

2	Snowy Hydro Cabramurra Tour S	NSW	(064) 53 8521
2–3	Basic skills instructor intake C	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
3	Klingsporn Classic S	Vic	(03) 5824 2961
16	Paddy Pallin Classic S	NSW	(02) 9264 2685
	Snogaine R	Vic	(03) 9890 4352
	Razorback Rush (Mt Stirling) S	Vic	(03) 5824 2961
16–17	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
	WA Champs 24-hour R	WA	(08) 9275 4734
17	Lake Mountain Ski Chase	Vic	(03) 9754 8329
24	Rocky Valley Rush S	Vic	(060) 20 8660
30	Kangaroo Hoppet, Australian Birkebeiner, Joey Hoppet S	Vic	(03) 5754 3103

September

6	Charles Derrick Memorial S	Vic	(060) 24 5974
7	Stirling Silver S	Vic	(03) 5824 2961
13	Brown Brothers Mt Hotham to Falls Creek S	Vic	(03) 9531 6073
14	Jurkiewicz Wilderness Sports Kosciuszko Tour S	NSW	(06) 254 0115
20	6-hour R	Vic	(03) 9890 4352
	12-hour R	NSW	(02) 9874 0226
27–28	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic	(03) 9459 4277

October

4–5	Basic skills instructor training C	NSW	(02) 9725 4322
4–6	Sea kayak advanced proficiency assessment	NSW	(064) 52 3826
9–12	Snow & Outdoor Trade Show (trade only)	Vic	(03) 9482 1206
11	Snogaine R	NSW	(064) 56 2242
11–12	24-hour R	NSW	(02) 9874 0226
18	6- and 12-hour R	Qld	(07) 3369 1641
	12-hour R	SA	(08) 8364 4390
	12-hour R	WA	(08) 9275 4734
18–19	8- and 24-hour Vic Champs R	Vic	(03) 9890 4352
25–26	Introductory canoe/kayak course	Vic	(03) 9459 4277
	Basic skills instructor training C	NSW	(02) 9344 0332

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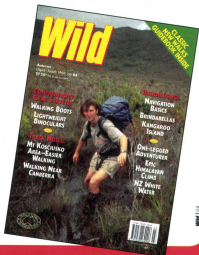
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MADE IN AUSTRALIA

the hotham to falls ski race

This event is unique, with a carnival atmosphere, a challenging course over some beautiful terrain, sensational views—including of Mt Feathertop—and an eclectic mixture of competitors. The Hotham to Falls race information describes the event as 'the most demanding ski race in Australia'. There isn't a machine-groomed track and for two kilometres there aren't any snow-poles, so participants must rely on a compass bearing if visibility is poor.

The Hotham to Falls began in 1978 when Mt Hotham legend Audun Endestedt raced a car to Falls Creek, covering the distance in 1 hour and 51 minutes. In 1986 Endestedt established the present record of 1 hour and 27 minutes for the 25 kilometre journey. Going into the 1996 event Howmans Gap 'mountain man' Andrew Kromer had won the Hotham to Falls for the previous five years. In 1995, in slow conditions, he was the only racer to beat the Hotham to Falls bus, which took 2 hours and 18 minutes to complete the journey.

Because of the potential dangers connected with crossing the High Plains, participants are required to carry a pack containing safety equipment and be able to use a map and compass. Other challenges include a steep, 250 metre descent through snow gums, a 350 metre climb (mostly on foot) up from the Cobungra valley to the High Plains and a crossing of Pretty Valley Pond. Apart from those who choose to wear fancy dress, there are three categories for entrants: 'Racers', who attempt to beat the bus; 'Tourers', who ski with a three kilogram pack; and 'Heavy Tourers'—such as myself—who use metal-edged skis and carry a five kilogram pack.

Bill and Ben join the merry throng at the start of the Hotham to Falls ski race, Victoria. *David Farrell*



Entrants must have completed a 21 kilometre Birkebeiner ski race in less than 2 hours and 40 minutes to be eligible to enter the Hotham to Falls. The event is always held in mid-September when the snow begins to melt and the crimson rosellas return to the High Country.

Last September the event was moved to Falls Creek for the first time after a huge dump of snow had fallen two nights earlier. On the day of the race the ski-patrol warned of the potential for avalanches, high winds and snowfalls on the High Plains and this prompted the course to be changed to an out-and-back, 14 kilometre ski over the dam wall and a short way up the Mt Nelse road. It was only the third time the course has been changed—an enviable

record considering the High Country's weather. In such conditions the many competitors wriggling into quirky fancy dress inside the Windy Corner shelter before the start were a sight to behold!

Andrew Kromer once again beat the field home to take out his sixth, successive Hotham to Falls. Tradition demanded that competitors be handed a glass of 'bubbly' as they slid under the banner outside the Frying Pan Inn to finish before taking the bus trip back to Harriettville. Also traditional is the night of celebrations which follows, with a delicious meal, superb wines (provided by the event's sponsors) and dancing until midnight!

David Farrell

has become so large in recent years that Canberra can no longer provide a suitable venue. This year's show will be held at the Melbourne Showgrounds on 9–12 October—Thursday to Sunday. (SOTA is open to trade buyers only.) For more information, contact the show's organiser, Monica Perry-meant, on (064) 57 2208.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

● Bibbulmun Track upgrade

The State's premier long-distance walking track, the Bibbulmun Track, is being extensively upgraded at present to make it more attractive to bushwalkers. (See 'The Long Walks', *Wild* no 54.) About 90 per cent of the route has been realigned to avoid roads. New camp-sites and shelter huts have been constructed and a new section 180 kilometres long has been added to the track along the State's southern coastline,

which will bring the eventual total length of the track to 950 kilometres. The track works are scheduled for completion in late 1998; some sections have already been finished. More information is available at the Department of Conservation & Land Management's excellent Bibbulmun Track web site at http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/bibbulmun_splash.html/.

John Chapman

● Weebubbie negotiations

Following the closure by authorities of Weebubbie Cave on the Nullarbor Plain last year (see *Wild Information*, *Wild* no 64), a delegation from the Australian Speleological Federation has approached the WA Department of Land Administration and secured access to the cave for ASF members. The deciding factor in the negotiations is believed to have been the ASF's \$10 million public liability insurance. ASF members must still contact the DLA before visiting the cave.

Stephen Buntton

OVERSEAS

● Vertigo inducing

The cave containing the world's longest pitch—in the Kanin Massif in Slovenia (see *Wild Information*, *Wild* no 64)—has been named Vrtiglavca-Vertigo. The shaft was previously explored in the 1960s but its true depth was disguised by a plug of snow at about -100 metres. The shaft has now been surveyed as 634 metres deep but as the first 110 metres of the descent are against a curving wall the extent of the pitch's free hang is 513 metres—still significantly longer than the previous titleholder. A nearby, 750 metre deep cave with an entrance pitch of 501 metres—Brezno Pod Velbom—was subsequently found blocked with snow at -370 metres. ●

SB

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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The evidence that greenhouse-induced global warming is having a severe impact on the environment has grown still further with the discovery of cracks in another Antarctic ice-shelf abutting the Antarctic Peninsula. In February research scientists on a Greenpeace expedition observed large cracks in the Larsen B Ice-shelf which were considered to be strong evidence that a catastrophic collapse may be imminent. (The Larsen A Ice-shelf collapsed in 1995.) British glaciologists have expressed fears that the ice-shelf which rings the 'frozen continent' may be approaching a 'thermal limit', at which point widespread collapses similar to those already seen along the Antarctic Peninsula could occur.



QUEENSLAND

Green development?

Hopes that the Federal Court might overturn last year's Federal Government approval of the controversial resort development at Port Hinchinbrook were dashed in February when the court found against conservation groups contesting the decision. Friends of Hinchinbrook has argued that the Federal Government breached the requirements of the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act* when it granted permission for developer Keith Williams to clear mangroves at Oyster Point and dredge the Hinchinbrook Channel which separates the point from World-Heritage-listed Hinchinbrook Island. The group will now appeal to the High Court. See Action Box item 1.

Elsewhere in the wet tropics, the Douglas Shire Tourism Authority, the Douglas Shire Council and local conservation groups such as the Daintree Rainforest Taskforce voted at a meeting in February to oppose government plans to extend the State electricity grid into 1000 freehold blocks within the boundaries of the Daintree World Heritage Area. (At least 150 private blocks within the Daintree are powered by solar panels or small-scale hydroelectric generators—a model for future development.)

Big dry

Queensland environment groups are calling for the reining in of development in the

Cooloola Coast region due to the pressure placed on the natural water-supply in the Cooloola National Park. Several studies, including one commissioned by the Environment Department, have found that the extraction of water from the park—which includes the internationally significant Noosa River system—has the potential to harm the area's ecosystem. The State Government, however, is urgently pressing ahead with plans to expand the water-supply to meet an expected increase in the local population of as much as 900 per cent in coming years. See Action Box item 2.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Kanangra-Boyd wilderness declaration

In February the Kanangra-Boyd wilderness was officially recognised with the declaration of 111 000 hectares within Kanangra-Boyd and Blue Mountains National Parks under the *NSW Wilderness Act*. Still to be declared (following government approval in April last year) are substantial areas of Sydney Water land adjacent to Lake Burragorang (including the lower Kowmung River). Unfortunately, several concessions have been made to owners of private plots

A result of global warming? Crack in the Larsen B Ice-shelf, Weddel Sea, Antarctica. Greenpeace

within the park boundaries which will allow commercial and private horse-riding to continue along most of the Cocks Creek and part of Kanangra Creek, and motor vehicles to travel along the Scotts Main Range Trail.

Warragamba Dam update

The Kowmung River and other Blue Mountains areas threatened by the planned 23 metre raising of Warragamba Dam are a step closer to having a more sensible plan implemented to safeguard the dam from its inability to handle large floods. The official results from the exhibition of the environmental impact statement during summer indicated 'overwhelming support' for the option of a second spillway, which does not entail raising the dam. This leaves the government little choice but to issue final approval for this option and order an immediate start of the works for a second spillway.

See Action Box item 3.

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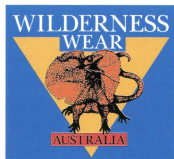


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● Barraba Trail

Barraba Shire Council, supported by Minister for the Environment Pam Allan, is believed to be determined to create a through road in Mt Kaputar National Park. Under the plan the council wishes to lengthen the existing Barraba Trail from the east along a steep ridge to within 300 metres of existing camping and visitor facilities at Mt Lindsay (which are already connected to the park's major western access road). Conservationists believe that if the plan is approved the council will apply pressure to complete the 300 metre link to the major road, finalising its 70-year plan to provide a through route for tourists.

Conservationists believe that a through route will bring negligible benefits to Barraba and ruin one of the remote parts of the National Park. See Action Box item 4.

● Newhaven Gap track

Bushwalkers using the main, northern, entry point into the Budawangs at Newhaven Gap will now have to walk a further seven kilometres at the start and end of their walk following the declaration of the Budawang wilderness on the NSW south coast. The National Parks & Wildlife Service is constructing a new car park and camp-site near the edge of the National Park, at the start of the track to Newhaven Gap. The NPWS states that this new site is more suitable, eliminates a long intrusion into the recently declared wilderness area, and places further out of reach localities in the Budawangs such as Folly Point and Hidden Valley which have suffered from heavy use.

Bushwalkers who wish to avoid the additional walk in at the northern end of the park are discouraged from switching to the heavily used Budawangs' southern entry point (to the Castle and Monolith Valley) but instead should contact the NPWS Ulladulla office on (044) 55 3826 to inquire about suitable alternatives.

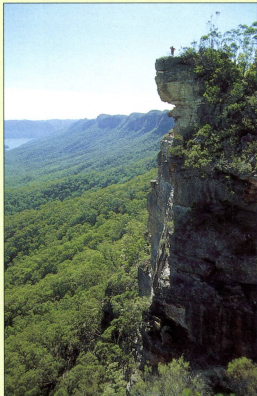
● Sydney Water management plans

Five draft management plans for special areas under the control of Sydney Water to the south and south-west of Sydney have been prepared jointly by the NPWS and Sydney Water. The plans will provide a legal framework to protect the integrity of Sydney's water supplies and their ecological values. Of interest to bushwalkers is an exhaustive public consultation process run in conjunction with the finalisation of the plans—especially relating to the Warragamba Special Area, upstream from Warragamba Dam. This process seeks to determine the views of a range of stakeholders on the recreational use of the special areas. Most are calling for increased access to the bush in question; bushwalkers, in particular, are trying to avoid a repeat of the restrictions—later hastily withdrawn—imposed in 1995.

Some bushwalkers have expressed fears that without cogent input from walkers much of the catchment area may be placed off limits.

● Wollemi focus

Wollemi National Park with its associated, unprotected wilderness is at the crossroads this year. While the creation of Wollemi National Park in 1979 permanently protected almost 500 000 hectares of land from major threats of development, more subtle pressures continue to beset the National Park and chip away at its edges.



Lake Burrigorang from the Blue Breaks, southern Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Bushwalkers are at present negotiating for access to ridges near the dam. *Andrew Cox*

As well as threats from nearby coal-mining—which is literally undermining the integrity of some wilderness areas—the booming popularity of canyoning in the Blue Mountains is placing pressure on Wollemi. Every summer season brings fresh reports of new walking tracks, abseil bolts, painted track-markers, informal car parks, and lengthened access roads. In addition, more and more previously obscure canyons are being publicised in track notes and tourist brochures and visited by commercial and private parties. Four-wheel driving also plays its part in degrading the wilderness values of the region.

Many of the problems arise because the park doesn't have a plan of management. (A draft was released for comment in 1988 and never adopted and is now so out of date that it has been necessary to prepare a new one.) As *Wild* went to press the long-awaited, revised draft plan of management was about to be released for comment;

submissions close at the end of July. This was expected to coincide with the completion and public exhibition of a report which recommends the formal protection as wilderness of 283 000 hectares within Wollemi National Park, the northern end of Blue Mountains National Park, and small areas of the Newnes and Corricudgy State Forests. Unfortunately, the wilderness assessment is considered by many conservationists to be deficient in its estimate of the northern and eastern parts of the region—failing fully to identify and recommend protection of suitable wilderness in these areas—and makes additional compromises due to competing interests. Wilderness groups insist that the government must—as a minimum—declare all the identified wilderness and also seriously consider protecting an expanded area in the east and north.

See Action Box item 5.

Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

1 Contact the Queensland Conservation Council, PO Box 12046, Elizabeth St PO, Brisbane, Qld 4002; phone (07) 3221 0188. Make a tax-deductible donation to the council's Hinchinbrook Legal Fighting Fund.

2 Contact the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, PO Box 269, Nambour, Qld 4560; phone (07) 5441 5747, fax (07) 5441 7478. Or express concern over the future of the Cooloola National Park by writing to Premier Rob Borbidge, Executive Building, 100 George St, Brisbane, Qld 4000; fax (07) 3221 1496.

3 Write to Craig Knowles, Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney, NSW 2000, urging him to approve and implement the government's preferred side-spillway option without flood mitigation.

4 Oppose any plan to extend the Barraba Trail in Mt Kaputar National Park by writing to Pam Allan, Minister for the Environment, Parliament House, Macquarie St, Sydney 2000.

5 Obtain copies of the draft management plan for Wollemi National Park and the Wollemi Wilderness Assessment Report by phoning (02) 9585 6444. Write a submission before the end of July and send it to NPWS Central Region Office, PO Box 95, Parramatta, NSW 2124.

6 Contact the Wilderness Society, 355 Little Bourke St, Melbourne, Vic 3000; phone (03) 9670 5229, fax (03) 9670 1040.

7 Details of the investigation can be obtained from the Commissioner, Public Land Use Commission, GPO Box 2036, Hobart 7001; or phone (03) 6233 3769.

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VICTORIA

● ARC abolished

The Alpine Resorts Commission—which was responsible for the management of significant sections of Victoria's High Country—has been abolished as part of a major government shake-up of the management of alpine resorts. Unfortunately, the scrapping of the ARC—its performance had long been under fire, not least in the pages of *Wild*—is not the conservation victory many may have hoped for. In place of the ARC will be a new central board to deal with issues of statewide concern; many of the individual resorts, however, will now be self-managed and the management of smaller resorts formerly under ARC supervision such as popular cross-country skiing venues Mt Stirling and Lake Mountain is to be 'privatised'. The Victorian National Parks Association has expressed concern that the new management structure may not provide adequate representation for conservation interests or other, non-commercial, stakeholders.

Of immediate concern to the VNPA is the impact on the Alpine National Park of a proposed helicopter shuttle service between the Falls Creek and Mt Hotham resorts, which—despite government claims that it wishes to encourage competition in the downhill skiing industry—recently came under the control of a single owner.

Those familiar with the State's Alps were perplexed to read an advertisement lauding the area's attractions which appeared in the *Age* in late January. As well as promoting a private business ('A night at Dinner Plain's Crystal Creek Resort is just \$50 per person twin share and includes...') the advertisement, which bears a Tourism Victoria logo, describes Mt Hotham as 'the highest peak in the Victorian High Country'. A passing glance at a topographic map reveals that there are at least seven Victorian peaks (Mts Featherston and Bogong among them) higher than Hotham. Geographical embarrassment or promotional hype?

● Chemicals dumped on wetlands

Despite recent rhetoric supporting the protection of the country's wetlands, Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill endorsed a State Government decision to shift the Coode Island chemical storage facility to land excised from the internationally recognised wetland reserve at Point Lillias on the Bellarine Peninsula, south-west of Melbourne.

The Point Lillias decision was one of many issues raised at a public rally in February which was attended by more than 3000 people protesting the perceived anti-conservation stance of the State Government.

● Up front or back room?

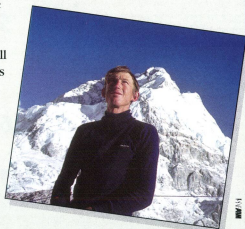
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process by which Regional Forest Agreements are drawn up in Victoria. In April the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society presented the government with a plan more fully to involve the community—including conservation groups—in RFA negotiations and avoid a repeat of the *fait-accompli*-style drafting of the East Gippsland RFA late last year. (See page 25 of *Wild* no 64.)

According to Wilderness Society campaigner Kate Kennedy: There are two ways of dealing with forest decisions: back-room deals or a round-table approach. We saw

In February the Tasmanian Minister for Parks & Wildlife, Peter Hodgman, wilted under pressure from an alliance of so-called 'ecotourism' companies and various west coast interests and called for access to the road to be maintained. His excuse was that the road 'generated' \$80 000 a year. (This argument was categorically refuted by the advice of his own department, which revealed that Tasmania would be more than \$80 000 better off by closing the road and spending maintenance monies elsewhere.)

Letters—including a submission from *Wild*—received by Senator Hill during last-ditch efforts to have the management plan enforced were three to one in

Only 3500 hectares—less than five per cent of the forests evaluated—were recommended for protection from mining and mineral exploration. These included the remote Spero River in the State's South-west, rainforests on the Hellyer River, and a small patch of ancient Huon pine on Mt Read.

No rainforests in the Tarkine were recommended for protection from mining. Australia's greatest tract of temperate rainforest, upstream from the Savage River mine, remains under threat. Also threatened are the rainforests on Mt Ramsay, Mt Dundas and the spectacular and much photographed Mt Murchison.

A further 296 000 hectares of rainforest not considered by the commission remain open to mining as well, leaving two-thirds of Tasmania's rainforests under threat from mining.

The commission will next investigate the rolling hills and moorlands cut by deep gorges just to the north-west of Cradle Mountain, including much of the catchment of beautiful Pencil Pine Creek. At present these areas are suffering damage from uncontrolled horse-riding, mineral exploration and use by four-wheel drives. Tasmanian conservationists welcome public participation in decision making about the future of these lands. However, they are unhappy with the boundaries of the area evaluated, which leave out some key features and ecosystems. The commission is to report on the future of part of this area by the end of 1998.


See Action Box item 7.

GL

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Exmouth ex-cave-ations

Limestone-quarrying operations for the construction of a marina at Exmouth recently stumbled across the previously unknown Marina Quarry Cave, which was found to contain extensive Pleistocene bone deposits in the sediments on its floor. Local caver Darren Brooks, realising the significance of the deposits and that violation of the fragile cave environment could potentially lead to deterioration of the fossils, sought a temporary halt to quarrying. However, despite instructions from a Department of Transport works supervisor that excavation in the vicinity of the cave should cease, quarry workers continued blasting in the area and even drilled into the cave itself.

After a visit from representatives of the Western Australian Museum work at the site stopped, but not before diesel fuel had leaked into the cave and many large boulders had crashed on to the cave floor, significantly reducing the area available for study. Palaeontological work is now proceeding. 

Stephen Buntton

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



The alpine environmental disaster area that is the Mt Hotham, Victoria, ski village is to be greatly expanded. Doug Humann. Right, cattle grazing in the High Country is still a concern. Brendan Eishold

plenty of back-room deals in East Gippsland and the result was a sham.

Early this year two children made a startling discovery in an East Gippsland logging coupe. They found the bizarre fairy lantern, an extremely rare, leafless plant about which very little is known. It is the first time this species has been identified in East Gippsland and as *Wild* went to press conservationists were still waiting for a response to the discovery by the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources. The area where the discovery was made is scheduled to be logged this year.

See Action Box item 6 if you want to learn more about the RFA process.

TASMANIA

Government U-turn on road

Federal Environment Minister Robert Hill reversed government policy on the Mt McCall road in Tasmania's South-west in March by deciding to keep the road open. The 1992 management plan for the State's World Heritage Area—agreed to by both the State- and Federal Governments—stipulated the closure of the Mt McCall road by September this year. (See Green Pages, *Wild* no 63.)

favour of closing the road; advice from his department also stressed the importance of doing so. Despite this, on 14 March he capitulated to lobbying by the commercial interests and Tasmanian politicians and agreed to keep the road open.

However, the battle is not over. While the existing management plan is in place the road must by law close this September. The process for changing the plan is complex and in the meantime the Tasmanian Government is liable to legal challenge.

Geoff Law

Land-use 'umpire' set-back

Tasmania's Public Land Use Commission, an 'independent umpire' on land-use decisions, has recommended that over 70 000 hectares of the State's finest rainforests remain open to mining and mineral exploration. The logic behind the decision was explained by the commission as: '...[rightly or wrongly] there is no way either a Liberal or Labor Tasmanian Government will preclude mining exploration in these areas.' The rainforests concerned are mainly in the Tarkine and on the West Coast.

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Location, location, location

Sites for sore eyes, by **Quentin Chester**



You're chilled, famished and weary. The day is fading rapidly from sepia to grey. All you want is to throw off your pack, hoist the tent and see the contents of several food sacks bubbling on the stove. But there's somebody out in front with other ideas—'I still reckon there's gotta be a better spot a bit further on'. You groan and roll your eyes under arched brows. Onward you plod.

There's usually one in every group: a self-appointed camp-site expert. I have known several otherwise amenable co-travellers who have a fetish with bush real estate. No abuse nor any appeal to reason, violence or celestial authority will dissuade them from their mission—they simply cannot rest until all available camp-site options have been assessed. Usually the only way out is to broker a compromise. You agree to sit tight and mutter while they scout ahead.

Where does this primal urge come from? According to the eminent American biologist Edward O Wilson, we *Homo sapiens* have an innate preference for certain habitats. Ideally, the site is elevated yet close to water. There should be vistas of grassy plains dotted with clumps of trees.

Edward O and his chums probably have elaborate evolutionary arguments to support their theories, doubtless to do with the slow emergence of our species as hunter gatherers on the African savannah. To be honest, I don't see a lot of mystery in the fact that we, like a lot of other creatures, prefer a sheltered position with a view rather than a toxic, mosquito-infested swamp.

These days, of course, the life most of us have chosen is a few steps removed from our 'primitive' past. We live cheek by jowl in suburbs blessed with conveniences not

Location, location, location. (South coast, Tasmania.) *Stephen Curtain*

normally available on the savannah, such as jobs, houses and pay television. The disadvantage is that the nearest water that doesn't come out of a tap probably is toxic while the views are more likely to be of our neighbour's washing. This may well explain the obsessive behaviour of so many camp-site seekers. They are trying to reclaim a vision from the good old days of noble savagery when everyone had a camp-fire with a view.

Still, I do wish my companions would remember that at the end of the day what's at stake is a place for the night and not a protest against two centuries of industrial tyranny. Speaking personally, as long as there is a patch of roughly level

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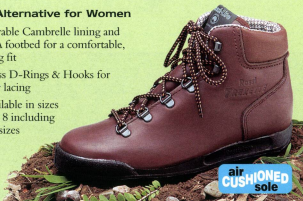
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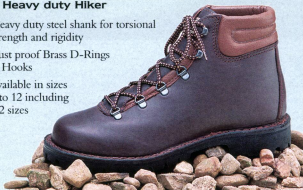
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ground on which I can rest my head any site will get a big tick of approval. And if I'm more or less out of the weather, that's five-star luxury. After all, soon it will be dark and tomorrow is another day.

That said, I will admit that there are quite a few factors worthy of consideration. For example, if the ground happens to be too far from the horizontal then in the frictionless environment of nylon-covered, inflatable mats and sleeping-bags you'll probably end up in a foetal bundle at the bottom of the tent or musing about your co-tenants' oral hygiene as you slither helplessly into their personal space.

I also have to confess that surfaces are important. Camping on a bed of soft, fluffy grass may have story-book appeal but in my experience venomous things are likely to be living in it, as well as hidden lumps or twigs that have a way of suddenly digging at one's vertebrae during the wee, small hours. Then, when you drop the tent in the morning you find the floor sodden with moisture. And the ecologically sensitive also have to wear the shame of crushing flat the habitat of any number of fellow organisms.

Camping on sand is less likely to provoke ecoguilt and is also a lot kinder on the spine. Alas, the stuff gets everywhere. A week I spent on Fraser Island was memorable for many things but what really stuck in my mind, so to speak, was the sand. The fragrant stew and curries we slaved over a hot Trangia to prepare were invariably laced with fine grit that set one's teeth on edge. Similarly, within seconds of crawling into the tent it was scattered with grounds for complaint and despite a fastidious preening session several million grains of silica somehow found their way inside our sleeping-bags.

I guess if a clean surface is what you're after, snow is hard to beat although it does, of course, have obvious drawbacks—its temperature being just one. For my money rock is the way to go. Give me a warm slab any day (or night). With the squishy mats and spiffy tents available these days camping on stone creates few complications. It's reassuringly solid, requires minimal maintenance and when the time comes to move on there's nary a trace of your presence—apart, perhaps, from the odd patch of ruffled lichen.

Over the past few years my favourite campsites have been on assorted rocky plateaus, river terraces and ridgetop ledges. When a companion and I found ourselves caught in a blow on an island off Wilsons Prom, our position among the tussocks became 'untenable'. Wind gusts of 100 kilometres an hour flattened our small tunnel shelters. For an hour we looked high and low for an alternative site before settling upon a sheltered nook high among the granite tors. Protected from the howling gale we sat smugly cooking our dinner as low-flying clouds dashed past just above our heads. Nevertheless, solid foundations are not everything. After a hectic day we turned in for an early night. Everything was

fine until I was about to slide into a deep sleep. At that moment the night air was rent by the cries of little penguin chicks which had emerged from hidden nests to call out to their parents returning from a day's fishing in Bass Strait. For the rest of the night I tottered on the brink of consciousness as the barking, sneezing and chirping continued outside my tent.

Noisy neighbours and other sounds in the night can be a test of one's patience. I've always enjoyed camping by a surf beach with the steady boom and rumble of waves hitting the shore. Camping near water is not necessarily always a wise move. Some people find creek music quite soothing. For others the sound of a trickling stream is a form of water torture, like a dripping tap. On the borders of consciousness you imagine you hear gurgling calls, voices, maniacal laughter. Worse still is the constant, subliminal suggestion that one's bladder needs emptying and a sleepless night getting up to answer nuisance calls of nature.

The other drawback of camp-sites by creeks and pools is that often a lot of other creatures frequent such places. To those of a caring disposition this means the risk of disrupting the lives of various animals who rely on such sites as watering-points. For light sleepers there is also the likelihood of being regularly stirred by assorted thumping and scratching sounds. At Top End waterholes this doesn't just mean visits from wallabies and other nocturnal travellers but the real possibility of waking to the sound of reptilian tails thrashing in the shallows.

Even camping away from water is no guarantee of peaceful slumber. A leafy bower to call your own may offer a feeling of intimacy with the bush yet it has to be said that forests tend to be raucous places. If it's not the sound of branches rasping against your fly-sheet, it's something rattling through the leaf litter or limbs creaking overhead.

Moreover, where there are trees you tend to find lorikeets, mobs of screeching corellas and squabbling colonies of fruit bats. Being roused by the dawn chorus is one thing, but when a bunch of barking owls lets rip on a still, tropical night it's enough to make your blood curdle. Their crescendos of 'wook-wook' cries, growls and high pitched wails are the stuff of nightmares even if you never watch 'The X-Files'.

Pitching your tent among the tall timber might be okay for a blast of jungle-style commotion but to my mind the best locations are on high. If I've risked a coronary to hump a pack load of food and gear into the back country, at least I might as well have a view to die for. Aside from the romance of waking to the sun lighting up nearby peaks and ridges there is the exquisite possibility that between you and the distant horizon there is not another soul.

Elevated sites do require a willingness to improvise. Level ground out of the prevailing breeze can be tricky to find and

reaching the nearest water might entail a serious descent. One also has to be mindful that by perching one's luminous dome on an exposed eyrie one is creating a potential eyecore for fellow pilgrims in the area. Notwithstanding these considerations, a lofty vantage point offers many rewards, from close-up glimpses of eagles and other raptors wheeling overhead to dress-circle seats for contemplating the heavens at midnight.

Having discovered such a possie there is always the opportunity for return visits. My all-time favourite roost is a bench of rock that faces north-east to greet the morning light. Although up high, it is fortified against the elements by a cirque of crags which also provide a fetching backdrop. And, as the real-estate advertisements say, the views are stunning.

Beyond its natural attributes, the appeal of this spot is as a fixed point around which odd strands of personal history have been spun. Over the years I've seen the place in a variety of moods. On placid autumn days I've basked on the rock, soaking up the solitude and silence. There have been spirited weekends of electrical storms and sudden downpours. Most memorable of all are the misty mornings when the fog has lifted before my eyes like a biblical revelation.

When such a place has been part of your life for a decade or two it can take on a peculiar significance. Should this also be a site where you received some early introductions to companionship, euphoria and fear, it can become a kind of incubus feeding your waking and sleeping moments with stray images and remembered incidents. After a while the act of going back is like a reunion with a close friend who also happens to be part of oneself.

So it is perhaps forgivable that the name and position of this particular locale is withheld. Call me selfish or antisocial if you like, but for me the thing that really takes the gloss off any camp-site is not sand in the sleeping-bag, murmuring streams or barking owls. No, it's the prospect of finding one's cherished hideaway overrun by happy campers.

In this regard we are indeed fortunate to have so much space to play with. Compared to many other countries Australia is blessed with an *embarras de richesses*. Not to be hemmed in by humanity and have the freedom to select one's plot under the stars is, increasingly, a privilege not to be taken lightly.

So the next time someone says, 'Let's just keep going a little bit further', spare a thought for those who live in places where there isn't a choice about where to lay one's head. ●

Quentin Chester

Quentin Chester (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) writes regularly about going bush. He is the co-author of *The Outdoors Companion*, *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone* and is at present working on a book which explores the diversity of 28 Australian islands from the tropics to the sub-Antarctic.

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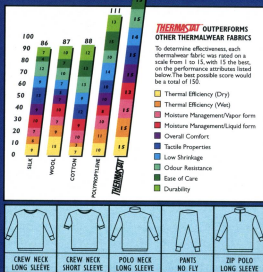
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Sheltering from the elements

Getting a roof over your head in the bush, by Geoff Law

To an experienced bushwalker, setting up camp for the night is one of life's more pleasant and reassuring routines—a relaxing and sometimes even sensuous end to an energetic day. But to the uninitiated, the whole business can seem intimidating—the preserve of hardy people who carry colossal loads on their backs and light fires without matches in the rain.

Sometimes outdoors shops are not much help. The novice is confronted by a bewildering array of tents, sleeping-bags, stoves and other knick-knacks, with shop assistants hovering in the background. How do you know what's right for you? How do you know what's essential and what's just cleverly marketed junk? And, more particularly, how do you avoid the undeniable hazards and discomforts of camping in the bush without choking off the potential for a great experience?

There are many ways to approach camping out. At one end of the spectrum is the 'control freak'. This camper has exhaustive check-lists which flag every item you could possibly cram into a rucksack. Control freaks never venture out of the car without having consulted all available literature about their venue, with campsites mapped out in advance. Walking with a control freak has its advantages. The toilet paper, for example, is never left behind. (The downside is being reproached for not having returned it to its proper place.)

At the other extreme is the 'free spirit'. The nearest thing to a check-list for these spontaneous innovators is the bedroom floor. For them, part of the joy of bushwalking is to wonder just which essential item of gear has been left behind this time—map, spoon, sleeping bag or matches—and by what means they'll get by without it. Free spirits seldom consciously select a camp-site. If it's raining in the morning, they'll simply stay put. If the weather's good, they'll walk until they drop—unless they've elected to camp on the most ex-



Counsel River, South-west Tasmania. In fragile, rainforested settings such as this, camp-fires are a no-no. Geoff Law

posed point on the route better to appreciate the view.

But what about you? You've decided to go bushwalking—not just for a day, but overnight. To work out what to do next, you might want to ask yourself a few questions.

● Why are you going?

Why are you leaving the comfort of home in the first place? What sort of experience are you seeking?

The answer may be blatantly simple: to walk a particular range from one end to the other in a weekend—in which case you'll want to travel light, with the minimum amount of gear and food to see you safely through.

Or the objective of the trip may be thoroughly to enjoy a particular locality over several days, resting and eating copious quantities of food while taking lots of photographs. This calls for a base camp. You can bring that book to read, the pancake mix and a jar of jam, a beach towel, a tripod, a jaffle-iron, binoculars for bird-watching and a bottle of wine. And you hope that the pleasant anticipation of several days of hedonistic sloth will compensate for the excruciating pain in your shoulders on the (preferably short) approach march.

For every type of trip, the underlying objective is the enjoyment of nature and wild country. Camping using 'minimal-impact bushwalking' (MIB) principles will help to protect these attractions. Most State parks services will have information on how best to protect the environment you are planning to enjoy. (See 'Minimal Impact Bushwalking' on page 48 of *Wild* no 59.)

● Where are you going?

In planning the type of camp-site you will establish on your forthcoming trip, it is helpful to know a little about the terrain

into which you're heading. A blizzard-prone Tasmanian mountain will demand different gear from what suffices on a tropical island.

In the prime bushwalking areas of southern Australia a tent is regarded as a necessity by most people—but not by everyone. My friend Joe, who has more than his fair share of free spirit in him, seems to regard a tent as an optional extra no matter where he goes. He insists that one of the best nights he has ever had was under a tent-fly in a thunderstorm on top of a mountain in Southwest Tasmania. The fly was pitched over the top of a prickly scoparia which cradled him above the water pouring across the sodden ground. The wind flicked the raindrops off the fly so that they had no chance to leak through. Mind you, Joe also frequently recounts, with equal relish, the sleepless nights he has spent out in the open being monstered by mosquitoes. Or the pain 'like an electric shock' he suffered when his back pressed against the snow during one of Tasmania's coldest cold snaps.

So let's assume, then, that you'll want a tent.

There is a wide range of sturdy, lightweight tents suitable for most conditions you're likely to encounter in southern Australia. Most of these have the following characteristics:

- a waterproof outer fly to shed rain, and a breathable inner to prevent condensation
- a sewn-in floor
- metal, segmented poles that give the tent its 'aerodynamic' shape
- a zippered internal door of mosquito-netting (absolutely essential)
- guys that help to steady the tent in high winds

While most such tents can normally be erected in about five minutes, they look

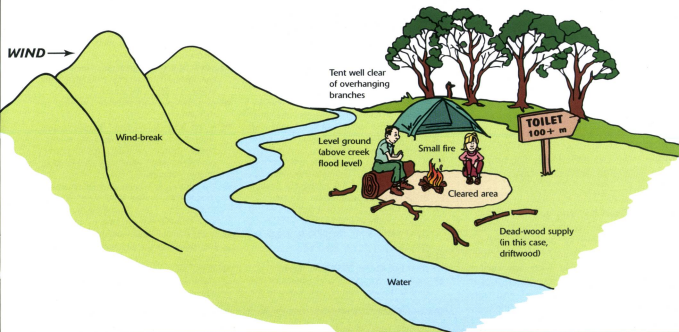
astonishingly complicated on first acquaintance. You will save yourself considerable frustration and discomfort if that first acquaintance is made in the familiarity of your backyard rather than on an exposed ridgetop in a blizzard at nightfall.

It goes without saying that a sleeping-bag is essential, and you'll need a sleeping-mat as well. These are either inflatable or made of foam and insulate you from the cold ground. In Tasmania, where much of the ground is like an oozing, wet sponge, they're particularly desirable.

Terrain, weather conditions, regulations and local ecology will determine whether you need a portable stove or can use a camp-fire. This is becoming a major issue amongst bushwalkers and land managers.

There's no doubt that in suitable conditions a camp-fire is a warm and cheery aid to conviviality. But this may come at a significant environmental cost. Fireplaces scar camp-sites; fossicking for wood degrades the nearby bush; camp-fires can escape and incinerate huge tracts of wilderness. In fragile environments where a harsh climate retards the growth of vegetation and where some species simply don't grow back after being burnt, the use of fire is unacceptable. For this reason, large tracts of Tasmania's National Parks and mainland alpine National Parks have been declared 'fuel stove only' areas where lighting a camp-fire can lead to a hefty fine. The same goes for lighting fires on peat or during a total fire ban.

In any case, the business of scavenging for wood in the rain when you're cold and wet and then having to endure eye-fuls of smoke before you get your cuppa has little to recommend it. For these reasons, more and more bushwalkers choose to do without fires and use lightweight stoves instead. The two



types of stoves most favoured burn either petrol (otherwise known as Shellite) or methylated spirits.

The petrol-burning stoves, though temperamental, are generally very fuel efficient and are preferred by those setting off on long trips in inclement conditions. Because many such stoves can be adapted for kerosene they are also preferable in places like the Himalayas where other types of fuel are unavailable.

However, since my 23rd birthday, when a badly mistreated petrol-burning stove almost incinerated my groundsheet, tent

will suit you. Most bushwalkers are only too happy to air their opinions on the merits of one brand versus another and you're likely to learn much more in the field than from shop attendants eager to make a sale.

You may also wish to ask your 'experienced' companions a few questions *before* embarking on the trip. For example: have you a tent? Have you ever put it up before? Have you a map? And so on. Bushwalking folklore abounds with the mishaps that have befallen novices who, sadly, placed considerable blind faith in big-talking incompetents.

● Selecting a camp-site

You have appropriate gear and acceptable companions and are on the track at last. Where are you going to camp?

The control freak, of course, will have selected each camp-site before leaving home. While you may not wish to go quite that far, it is helpful to have identified some potential campsites by studying the map to see where, for instance, sheltered gullies cross your route.

However, what looks like a perfect camp-site on the map may turn out to be a scrub-choked, pestilential swamp. So it's best to leave yourself some margin for error as far as day-

light hours are concerned. Experience generally shows that when confronted with the choice between making do with an adequate but uninspiring camp or press-

ing on in the expectation of finding a Shangri-La in the sunset, you're better off staying put. By the time you're in your sleeping-bag, most camp-sites are pretty much the same, anyway.

A good camp-site satisfies three basic criteria:

- there's enough open, level ground to pitch tents
- there's shelter from the wind
- there's a nearby source of potable water

Actually, you don't want the water too close. That inviting, flat patch of lush, green turf will probably become waterlogged after an hour's rain. The same goes for dry creek-beds and islands in rivers. Better to camp on that elevated, dried-out area of dead grass instead.

Shelter can come from topography—say, by camping in the lee of a hill or at the bottom of a deep valley. Or in more exposed areas it can come from boulders or trees. If camping under trees, however, look up to check for big, dead limbs before settling on a site. In very exposed areas even low shrubs can shield a tent and provide extra anchors for guys.

● Making camp

Pitching the tent may not always be the first priority. If that sweaty T-shirt is beginning to feel like ice on your back, it's a good idea to change into some warm, dry clothes.

Division of labour is recommended: while the control freak puts up the tent exactly how he or she wants to, other members of the party can collect water or start to make a cuppa.



A small, neat cooking-fire. *Brian Walker. Right, hedging bets. The only flat, dry spot was inside this derelict hut. Note the metho-burning stove. Low*

and self next to the Franklin River, I am more inclined to use—and to recommend—the metho-burning stoves. They are simple, safe, durable and compact. They'll absorb the punishment meted out by the most negligent of free spirits while satisfying the control freak's penchant for neatness. But whichever type of stove you use, make sure that your fuel bottle is easily distinguishable from your water-bottle and have plenty of water on hand to douse any unintended blaze.

(Having said all that, I also have to admit that there's nothing quite like a driftwood camp-fire on a beach or a sandy river bank. If you must have a fire make sure that it is in an established site—don't make a new scar—and leaves no trace whatsoever.)

● With whom are you going?

Camping with friends allows you to share tent, stove, first aid kit and other gear, thereby reducing the weight of your load.

If going with people who are more experienced than you, it also gives you a chance to assess their gear and find out which type of tent, stove or sleeping-bag

A control freak's guide to pitching a tent

The first time you pitch a tent in the bush it may be dark or pouring with rain. The following steps will reduce this drama to a manageable level.

Before you leave home:

- make sure that you know how to pitch the tent, preferably by having had a practice run in the backyard
- enhance the waterproofness of the tent by sealing the seams—this need only be done every couple of years
- tie slip-knots at the ends of the guys
- pack the tent so that guys and other attachments are not tangled, and with zips undone—this reduces the likelihood of zips buckling
- if tent-poles are of different lengths, mark one with tape so that you can easily see or feel the difference in dark or inclement conditions
- pack the tent, poles and pegs in a very handy position inside your pack—you don't want your sleeping-bag getting wet while you look for them

At the camp-site:

- clear the site of sticks and stones
- assemble the poles and open out the tent. If it's very windy, peg a guy to the

ground to ensure that the tent doesn't blow away. Place the various bags for poles, tent and pegs together so that you can find them again in the morning

- zip the doors closed (so that you know they can close after the tent is pitched)
- insert the poles and peg the tent to the ground ensuring that the tent fabric is sufficiently taut
- peg the guys to stabilise the tent in the wind
- open the tent and throw inside sleeping-bag, sleeping-mat, water-bottle, book, raincoat, toilet paper, whatever else you may need and, finally, yourself
- zip up the fly screen and exterminate mosquitoes in the tent by torchlight (unless you are a Buddhist, in which case chase them out one by one)
- keep a small towel or sponge handy for mopping up any water that leaks through
- sleep with as much ventilation as weather, temperature and insects allow

Even with the tent up, there are still things to do. Before relaxing, the control freak will have hung out wet socks to absorb the last anaemic rays of sunshine, fluffed up the sleeping-bag in the tent, put the torch in a strategic position, and zipped up the tent to keep the mossies out. And heaven help those who don't put the toilet paper in its place!

● At the camp-site

Now you can enjoy some well-earned food and rest, share out a few treats, and

can stay outside with a heavy-duty garbage bag over the top of them or be squeezed into the tent's vestibule if there's enough room. (But you'll find that there's nothing more frustrating than negotiating an obstacle course of gear every time you want to get into or out of the tent.) The same goes for wet boots and socks. (Garbage bags are far too useful to be used for garbage!) Food is packed inside one of the packs to keep it away from marauding animals. (Those tooth marks in the tent fabric were left by

good shake. That way you won't add leaf litter, dirt and squashed mosquitoes to either your load or to the walls of the tent. And during lunch, now that the weather has cleared up, you might also want to dry the tent in the sun. It won't weigh as much and you'll have one less chore to do when you get home.

Be sure to remove all dirt from the bottom of the tent and the pegs. This helps to prevent the spread of diseases from one area to another—which is becoming an increasingly serious problem.

In Tasmania alone, there are three tree-killing diseases which can all be spread by dirt on tents, pegs, boots, gaiters and those stupid, orange trowels.

● Back home

Within half an hour of the control freak's arrival at home soiled clothes are in the washing-machine, the sleeping-bag is airing and dirty pots are in the sink. The indolent free spirit, on the other hand, simply leaves the rucksack fully packed and will top up any leftover food with some fresh stuff next week. This approach can have its drawbacks, especially if you don't like mildewed tents or sleeping-bags that smell like mushrooms.

But don't reject everything the free spirit has to offer. Once the art of camping in the bush has lost its mystery you can yield to spontaneous whims. After all, bushwalking and camping 'out in the sticks' are meant to be ways of connecting with the natural world—and too many rules can spoil the fun.

In particular, be prepared to innovate. If the weather's fine and settled, why not camp on top of a mountain? Or under a sandstone overhang, without a tent? Or on the edge of an east-facing cliff for a great sunrise? Later, you can build snow-caves or igloos. Or leave the tent behind and head for Central Australia.

Just be sure to tell someone where you're going and leave the bush exactly as you found it. 🐾

Geoff Law has experience of camping all over Australia and Asia. He has been flooded out in New Zealand and Tasmania; has had a leech in the eye in the Grampians and a leech on the lip in the Victorian Alps; run out of toilet paper in Nepal, India and Pakistan; bivouacked uncomfortably in the mountains of Indonesia and Malaysia; been terrorised by a rat in a Snowy Mountains hut; and been eaten alive by mosquitoes in South-west Tasmania, at Daintree, on Fraser Island, at Kakadu and in Katherine Gorge. He can't wait for his next trip! A keen conservationist, he has worked for the Wilderness Society and Australian Conservation Foundation and is at present Australian Greens Senator Bob Brown's environment advisor.



take in the sunset... At least until someone hands you a pile of filthy dishes and spoons.

Washing up is never fun, so you may as well get it over with quickly. Water and a scourer are all you need. And be careful what you do with those food scraps. The next party to pass through may not appreciate your rice in the waterhole or silver paper in the fireplace. The best thing is to take all your rubbish home in a plastic bag. That includes those fruit stones—their sharp edges can harm the insides of the wallabies and quolls that swallow them whole. If you can carry it in, you can carry it out.

Now it's raining. There's not enough room in the tent for you and the packs. That means you'd better unpack everything you need for the night—and for breakfast—before turning in. The packs

a possum that found the dried fruit stashed in a side pocket of the tent.)

It's morning and you hear the sound of rain on the tent. Why not just sleep in for a while... Oh no, not now. Where's that damn toilet paper? Remember to go at least 100 metres away from the creek and to dig a hole at least 10–15 centimetres deep. You'd better take one of those wide tent-pegs (no, it's for digging the hole) because the stupid, orange trowel will simply break.

● Breaking camp

When dousing the fire, it's best to err on the side of overkill. This will help your peace of mind if strange, dark clouds suddenly appear on the horizon later in the day.

Before you pack the tent it's a good idea to turn it inside out and give it a



SHEDDING LIGHT ON Robert Rankin

Hector McLean profiles this outstanding Australian wilderness photographer

Robert Rankin and I met in a service station on the outskirts of Brisbane before dawn. In the glare beside the confectionary stand we had a brief conversation about the computer game *Doom* before we went on a bushwalk. Later, in the car, it struck me as odd that one of Australia's finest wilderness photographers should be prowling the lonely halls of *Doom*. I didn't know him very well then.

We are consumers—of food, of information, of the wilderness—with rapacious zeal. We accumulate, then we throw out. Few of us give much back, much less look back. 'Been there, done that. Cradle Mountain, tick. Hinchinbrook, tick.'

Robert Rankin has chosen to give something back to the pursuits about which he is passionate and in doing so has carved out a career. He's a man of many talents. He is a nature photographer, bushwalker, publisher and writer of photography and wilderness guides. He is also a film maker, a musician, a computer-software writer and a sound recordist. He has been a television producer and has pursued academic study in the field of science, particularly physics. As though that

His business, Rankin Publishers, produces calendars, diaries, cards, posters and books featuring Rankin's photography. It also produces CDs of his music, a series of wilderness screen savers for computers and a virtual exploration of 25 of Australia's best bushwalks on floppy disc and, soon, on CD-ROM. In a sense, Robert Rankin is Rankin Publishers' best and only product.

Despite their thoroughness and depth, to a certain extent these products inevitably pander to the human desire to possess and to know only superficially. However, Rankin hopes that the beauty of the wilderness shown in these presentations and the fact that they are imbued with a philosophy of care, preservation and conservation will engender a more careful and considered approach to wilderness.

Robert Rankin was born in 1951 and grew up in Brisbane. He came to bushwalking quite late. Despite having long had a desire to climb mountains as a boy, he had not pursued this dream. His family did not take part in any bushwalking activities and the regimentation of the Scouts held no appeal for Rankin. It wasn't until 1969, while studying physics at Queensland University,

the country. When we went walking I couldn't wait to get on top of the next ridge, almost to the extent that I'd tear off in front of the party.' Thus began his passion for Queensland's Scenic Rim and here, too, is a clue to his later exploits at bush running.

After his introduction to bushwalking Rankin also became active in rock-climbing for a few years. But he soon decided that he had no desire to push the limits of rockclimbing and began to combine his hobbies of photography and bushwalking. He'd had an interest in photography from an early age and in 1972 and 1973 had articles with photographs published in the now defunct outdoors magazine *Walhabout*. The first was about a trip to Hinchinbrook Island; the second concerned a walk in the Tasmanian wilderness. These two articles were the inspiration for his later career although at that stage he hadn't worked out how to earn a living by writing and taking pictures. Rankin completed his undergraduate studies in 1971 and embarked on a master's degree part-time, examining computer modelling of pollution in the Brisbane River. From 1971 to 1975 he supported himself by tutoring physics.

In 1973 he produced a small guide to Mt Barney in south-east Queensland and in 1977, with John Webb, a guide to the rockclimbs at Kangaroo Point, Brisbane's inner-city, outdoor rock-climbing venue. *Mount Barney and Rockclimbs of Brisbane* have a primitive, hand-made feel which is their charm. They are labours of love that encapsulate a particular moment in time. Those who still have copies of these booklets should keep them in a place where they can be stumbled across and cherished from time to time.

Mt Barney and Hinchinbrook Island remain close to Rankin's heart. They are the wilderness areas he first explored and they have a power that draws him back time and time again.

Rankin's interest in photography wasn't limited to the still camera; he'd also messed about with super-8 movie cameras. In June 1975, with funding from the Whitlam Federal Government, Rankin produced, directed, and shot a 30-minute, 16 millimetre film on Hinchinbrook Island called *Climb to the Clouds*. The film was shown on north Queensland television and a self-funded 30-minute, 16 millimetre film, *To Walk the Vertical*, followed in 1976. It was a record of climbing the East Face of Mt Crookneck, a peak in the Glasshouse Mountains in south-east Queensland. This film was subsequently shown to a wide audience on ABC Television.



were not enough, he has also run a marathon, is involved in orienteering and rogaining, and often runs half-marathons.

Rankin lives in one of Brisbane's leafier suburbs. His home is stark and austere. Trangia pots sit on his stove. The visitor is drawn to the decking verandah and the view into a deep, tree-lined creek below. After the summer storms the creek is a torrent. About 100 metres away on the other side of the creek is a freeway—symbol of a life which straddles the wilderness and the city.

Rankin and Trish Webber in the Lake Albina Hut (since demolished), Mt Kosciuszko, New South Wales, in 1981. Left, classic Rankin: Antarctic beech on the summit of Mt Ballow, south-east Queensland. All photos Rankin collection

that he became involved in rucksack sports with the university's bushwalking club.

Rankin joined the club because he wanted to get out into the bush. 'I was interested in landscapes and exploring

Even before that, Rankin used the film as part of a successful application to ABC Television for a position as a producer of science-education material. For the four years he was with the ABC Rankin gave up bushwalking. After all, he now had a real job in the real world.

In 1981 he returned to academic life and began a PhD in Science Communication at Griffith University in Brisbane. 'I could see an end to what I was doing with the ABC, so decided to return to study', he says today. Rankin's doctorate examined graphics and visual representations of scientific information and investigated how clear those representations were.

The previous year a friend had shown him a different type of visual representation—a Peter Dombrovskis calendar—and Rankin finally saw an outlet for his photographic hobby. In a tribute to Dombrovskis published in *Wild* no 62 after the photographer's death, Rankin said:

We can all identify individuals whose actions have had a marked influence on aspects of our own lives. For me, the brilliant wilderness photographer Peter Dombrovskis was such a person.

I still remember the first time I was shown a calendar featuring his photographs. The realism and attention to detail and composition were awesome. Since that day in 1980 I have tried to attain a similar perfection.

By the end of 1980 he had produced his own calendar. Rankin Publishers was born and a major shift in Rankin's career and intellectual focus took place. With the flexibility of time management that goes with study, he could spend a lot of time on bushwalking and photographic trips. While writing his doctoral thesis he supported himself by producing wilderness calendars. The regimen suited him perfectly. 'I have never wanted to work every day, nine to five, even though now I do go into the office nearly every day, Monday to Friday.'

Running also became an interest about this time. He ran his first marathon in 1983. 'I had an aim in life—if I could run a marathon in under three hours it would be the first and last marathon I would do.' He did it in under three hours and, indeed, has not repeated the endeavour, considering the marathon to be 'too long, too unhealthy and too hard on the body'. The half-marathon is more his distance and he also competes regularly in rogaines around Brisbane. Rankin runs at these events with his partner Sylvia Outridge (who has herself ridden a bicycle alone from Brisbane to Cooktown and walked on Fraser and Hinchinbrook Islands).

Outridge and Rankin met at a barbecue after a rogaine event. 'I used to drag him along to the climbing gym until one day he said, "Wouldn't it be nice to go to the movies?"' It's Rankin's depth and capability that Outridge finds attractive. 'He's a very intelligent and capable person; he's an all-round achiever. Anything he puts his mind to he can do. He's tried so many things; it's easy for a person to be good at one thing,

but he's very capable. I find that appealing and as individuals we have a lot in common.'

Rankin's success in publishing wilderness calendars led on to bigger and better things. Soon he turned his hand to producing major photographic books. His most significant publishing achievements to date are the books *Classic Wild Walks of Australia* and his treatise on photography *Wilderness Light*. The first half of *Classic Wild Walks of Australia* documents 25 wilderness walks photographically. This coffee-table volume is a

places and show them to as many people as possible.' Rankin is pragmatic about conservation and says that he can see both sides of the argument. He is against the controversial resort development in the Cardwell area near Hinchinbrook Island, for example, yet believes that in other designated areas limited development can be quite acceptable.

Wilderness Light uses Rankin's images to illustrate a step-by-step guide to the fundamentals and the philosophy of photo-



fine portfolio of Rankin's photography and took seven years to compile.

Although an immediate beauty is apparent in the photography in *Classic Wild Walks* it takes time to appreciate the full impact of the tension between textures of rock and foliage which seem to float on the shadowy hues of distant ranges, or the play of light on wet sand in the foreground of the dynamic backdrop of the spine of Hinchinbrook Island. Rankin is fond of using reflections as a tool for composition and as a means to add abstraction to the images. Always, the focus of his images is the play of light on leaves or on rocks; the wattles flowering in a forest; the folds of the ancient landscape.

The second half of the book is a set of detailed notes on the tracks, landscapes and environment. Maps are also provided. It is a book with appeal for everyone; from the armchair traveller to young enthusiasts who can be inspired to take these walks, to track-hardened old dogs who will be motivated to make the effort to visit these places one more time.

The text of his book quietly urges the reader to take care in and of the wilderness. However, Rankin hopes to make his strongest statements about environmental protection with his pictures. 'Rather than get up on a soap box, the photographer's answer is to take photographs of beautiful

Ready for the elusive 'perfect photo'; Rankin on the summit of Mt Difficult, the Grampians, Victoria, in 1989. Right, on the summit of the Thumb, Hinchinbrook Island, Queensland, in 1975: Trish Webber, left, Rankin, Janet Traves, Tim Low and Helen Tew.

graphy. It is probably his most balanced work to date. The pictures work in harmony and exemplify aspects of the text. It is a book that answers many questions about his approach and technique as well as being a good lesson in photography.

Rankin's other publications have been *On the Edge of Wilderness* (1983) and *Australian Wilderness Skills* (1977). Extracts from *On the Edge of Wilderness* have been reproduced in a smaller field guide, *Secrets of the Scenic Rim* (1992), a guide to bushwalking and its history in the area south-west of Brisbane.

The years of academic rigour and his extensive bushwalking experience have given Rankin the ability thoroughly to prepare for his (mainly solo) photographic trips. Referring to a trip to Federation Peak in South-west Tasmania, he says in *Wilderness Light*: 'Before my actual departure for this remote region I spent a lot of time preparing for the trip. This involved studying maps and reading books of the

area in order not only to determine a suitable walking route, but also to identify possible points on the route from which to photograph the peaks. As there are several recognised approaches to the mountain, I chose a path which would potentially provide the best camera angles.'

Because of this careful preparation Rankin has few anecdotes of horror trips or dangers. When pushed, he relates a tale of weather in the Western Arthur Range, in the wilderness of Tasmania, so bad that he had to shelter under a rock ledge and make a brew to recover from cold and exhaustion. Coming from someone who doesn't seem to differentiate between 'good' or 'bad' weather, the conditions must have been abominable. One of his few 'near misses' was when, with all his gear unpacked and spread out near Federation Peak, a huge gust of wind almost blew his empty pack away. It was caught on a bush on the edge of a cliff and he was lucky to retrieve it. On the same trip he had to crawl along the ground at one point to stop himself from being blown away.

Rankin says that he finds the process of taking

His achievements in bush running are explored in more detail in *Secrets of the Scenic Rim*. In some schools of bushwalking, to run bushwalking routes is an extension of the desire to walk faster and further in a given time. It is similar to the desire of rockclimbers to climb harder routes and of many outdoors enthusiasts to push their limits further in all aspects of outdoors activities—and to record one's accomplishments in any field is a common theme of human endeavour.

With Rankin's transition to wilderness photography and the setting up of Rankin Publishers came new challenges of business and of marketing his products. A friend, Judith O'Byrne, says: 'Rob likes to capture an image and to do it perfectly, and this isn't driven by money or anything like that. I think he could make a lot more money than he does. That's not a huge motivation.'

Rankin, too, says he has a diminishing interest in business. 'Once I was more interested in business than I am now. It was an exciting, new thing I'd never done before. Marketing a product and turning a profit was all pretty exciting when it worked well.' Roger Bourne, who ran with Rankin through the Scenic Rim, describes him as a very shrewd businessman. 'I said to him once, "Why don't you produce more posters, like Dombrovski?" He proceeded to give me a lecture on the economics of doing such a thing.'

Rankin's understanding of business allows him to maintain his


he then sells. He is working on a CD-ROM of *Classic Wild Walks of Australia* that will encompass the sights, sounds and topography of those areas. And, as I discovered at that service station, he has also spent some time on the computer confronting the demons in the dank halls of *Doom*.

A further example of Rankin's interest in new challenges is that he recently began to produce CDs of his music, combined with natural sounds. His friend John Argus revealed that Rankin attended music classes at the University of Queensland to gain some formal understanding of composition. The music is produced on a synthesiser and is in the 'new age', relaxation genre.

Rankin will undoubtedly continue to seek new ways to satisfy his desire for novelty and challenge. He says that there are few wilderness areas in Australia to which he hasn't been but that he intends to return to some he has visited only once although for him bushwalking has become a means to get to places to take photographs rather than a recreational pursuit in itself. As Roger Bourne and Judith O'Byrne note, he has found through his business a way that will always allow him to return to the bush. Outridge says: 'Rob loves being in the bush, and photography gives him a reason for being there.'

Rankin would like to travel overseas sometime in the future but doesn't see this as a new avenue for photography. Shirley Peardon, a friend of 15 years, says: 'What's amazed me is he has never been interested in going to those mountains overseas. It really surprises me; he really has an Australian focus.'

At one point in our conversation Rankin makes an odd observation about the time it took him to move to photography and publishing full time: 'There were a lot of lost years.' John Argus puts Rankin's career in perspective: 'It hasn't been different careers, it's been one career. He's just moved into different areas of presenting information.' This may seem a very calculated and academic assessment of Rankin's career. However, the quality of his pictures proves that beyond careful preparation the photographer must still have an eye for the finished picture. Rankin certainly has that uncommon gift.

I have walked with Rankin only once. He walked at his own pace, drifting in and out of the group as he stopped to take pictures. He seemed to walk light, despite carrying a still camera and a small video camera. In his willingness to share wilderness he tolerated our bluster and brouhaha although I'm sure that he would rather have walked the peaks of Mt Barney alone, soaking up their rugged charms once again. In his own, quiet way he has made a life sharing the Australian wilderness he loves with anyone who is looking for a way to find it. 

Hector McLean is a journalist who lives in Queensland. Once a sugar-cane farmer, he studied for four years in Brisbane before returning to the Mackay area where he has spent much time walking in nearby Eungella National Park. He has been active in outdoors activities for the past 20 years and has visited many popular bushwalking destinations in eastern Australia.



photographs to be the ultimate contemplation of the wilderness. In *Classic Wild Walks of Australia*, he says: 'A long time can be spent simply waiting for the right mood and during this time it is quite easy to become totally immersed in the scene that I am attempting to record.'

Outridge says that she has learned never to be without a torch when bushwalking with Rankin. 'He always says we'll be back well before dark, but he always gets so absorbed in taking photographs that he forgets the time.'

In contrast, Rankin has been known not only to walk briskly and unencumbered by packs and photographic equipment, but to push himself to the limit by running long distances through the bush. In *Classic Wild Walks of Australia*, he says: 'To ascend a mountain at a brisk pace is an attempt to appreciate the landscape totally.'

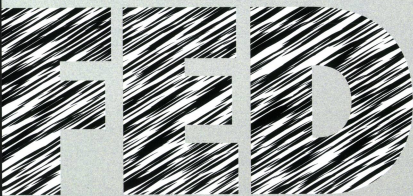
place in publishing without becoming too commercial and without being swamped by larger players. He says: 'Photography, writing, music, writing computer software—those things are more interesting than the actual business. But having made the products, you have to market and sell them.'

His office is in an unremarkable building in the Brisbane suburb of Toowong, a stone's throw from the ABC offices where he once worked and a few minutes from the University of Queensland where he used to study. The building has one of the world's slowest lifts; it's a testament to his patience that he can exist with this clunker.

Computers have recently become very important in Rankin's business. 'Computers allow you to run a lean business. I've become a bit of a computer nerd these days.' As well as for managing his business, he uses a computer to write software which

BLUF





Glenn van der Knijff's week-long ski tour in the heart of the Victorian Alps didn't go quite as planned

There was snow on the ground even before we reached Eight Mile Gap and I was not confident that Michael's Subaru would get much further, but he was a skilful driver and we reached the saddle at Refrigerator Gap safely.

We pulled over on one side of the clearing at the saddle and checked and double-checked our gear, making sure not to forget instep crampons and ice-axes as our security against possibly dangerous conditions. We were ready to begin.

Spurred on by a passing beam of sunshine we set off uphill along the road towards the small, snow-bound car park at the base of the Bluff. Striding up the slope, with back and leg muscles adjusting to the weight of rucksacks and inhibited movement, my thoughts wandered to the Mt Howitt area, the main goal of our trip. The previous winter I had passed over the Crosscut Saw and Mt Howitt and I was convinced that a lengthier stay was in order. In addition, neither Michael nor Tim (my companions) had been to that part of the Victorian Alps in winter, so this trip would provide a new experience for them.

Light snow was falling as we continued up the steepening North Face of the Bluff, and the rustling of wind in the treetops was an indication that severe conditions on top were likely. Fresh snow is usually a joy to ski on but the 20–30 centimetres that had fallen the night before made the ascent on skis extremely taxing. Before long I attached my skis to my pack and joined the others in walking. This was no easier, and I appreciated the rest when we struggled to the shelter of a large boulder.

My first, tentative steps from the boulder up the very steep and inconsistent snow-slope brought no delight. The old saying 'Two steps forward, one step back' seemed particularly appropriate. Each step was exhausting—I had to extricate my legs from the snow and the cramps which increased in frequency only served to infuriate me. I resorted to climbing on all fours and while progress was slow at least it made steady uphill movement possible.

I reached a solid band of rock a little further up and rested while the others scrambled below me. Above me the slope consisted of almost

vertical rock interspersed with groves of gnarled, stunted snow gums. When Tim and Michael caught up we continued climbing in Indian file, a matter of grabbing hold of branches or exposed rock holds to pull ourselves upward; at the same time we had to ensure that our skis which protruded about a metre above the tops of our rucksacks did not get snagged in the trees. Manoeuvring was difficult and I cursed frequently as I was struck on the head by snow and ice dislodged from the heavily loaded trees. I had no choice but to remove my skis from my pack and use them like paddles, pressing on them as I crawled, scrambled and climbed my way between rock clefts and gnarled trees. Tim had by now resorted to using his ice-axe for assistance while Michael struggled along below us.

I was wondering whether we'd ever get to the top when, almost without warning, we emerged from the rock-band and crested the summit plateau. No time was wasted in searching for a sheltered camp-site and it was after five o'clock when we stumbled upon a large lump in the white-out—probably a snow-covered rock or tree—which offered protection from the gusty westerly. Tim's bombproof North Face VE25 was quickly erected in the extreme cold and we dived into our sleeping-bags. A brew and a meal soon had us warm as toast, but we were discouraged by our slow progress; we had indeed anticipated a slow ascent but not that it would take us nearly five hours for the climb. We knew that we would have to move faster over the next few days despite the deep and unconsolidated nature of the snow. Regardless of our worries, sleep came quickly.

A slight increase in the light inside the tent was the only indication of a new day. Outside nothing had changed and it was not until late morning that we managed to drag ourselves out of bed. Packing our gear, we fumbled with our ice-encrusted tent in the chilling wind but managed to stow it away before frostbite set in.

Although we had walked on the Bluff on numerous occasions it was with some difficulty that we found the summit cairn. We stopped only briefly—there was nothing to see—then made our way eastward. Keeping close visual contact, the three of us were surprised to find the snow surface quite firm, and good for control. Ghostly trees loomed out of the fog as we approached a prominent saddle known as the Blowhole, and the low cloud lifted sufficiently to reward us with a partial view of the way ahead.

We were relieved that our navigational concerns were eased for a while, and the claustrophobic feeling of travelling through thick fog had, at least temporarily, disappeared. Although snow had started to fall again we had no trouble finding the ski trail to Bluff Hut. I bent into a tuck position and a hair-raising descent ensued.

I noticed an inviting wisp of smoke rising from the chimney when we arrived at the clearing outside the hut and footprints and ski tracks told us that we were not alone. Inside the warm shelter of the hut we found some space to prepare our lunch, greeted the inhabitants and chatted with their leaders,



who informed us that they were in charge of a tour group and were returning to Mansfield shortly. Just before they left, we graciously accepted their kind offer to use the fire; I wondered whether we'd meet them again when they returned the following weekend. With heavy, sullen clouds returning, we were unanimous about camping here for the night, taking up the group leader's offer to use the comfortable mattresses on the upper deck of the hut. The dripping tap in the main room was the only annoyance but we were under strict instructions to leave it dripping so that the pipes would not freeze. The pit, pit, pit of the tap was soon forgotten and, as the embers glowed that evening, Michael's port went down a treat.

Snow continued to fall in the morning so there was no hurry to leave our snug shelter. We spent a few hours indulging in a leisurely breakfast but eventually it was time to move on, and with some trepidation we ventured forth into the white-out.

For a change there was no initial problem in route finding and we followed the open form of Bluff Track as it slowly ascended Mt Lovick. Higher up we had difficulty keeping with the track but we managed to follow it round the northern flank of Mt Lovick, well above the flat-topped Square Head Jinny, before starting the gradual descent in the general direction of Lovicks Hut. We became confused when we lost contact with Bluff Track but we found it again as we descended. I launched into a few fast, giant-slalom-type turns down the track and I sped through a tall forest of alpine ash before reaching Lovicks Hut in a broad saddle.

Inside the hut we tried to kindle a fire; unable to find much in the way of dry wood, we were unsuccessful so we en-

In the gloom of the Macalister River valley. Below, tough going above the cliffs of the Bluff. Glenn van der Krijff. Pages 40 and 41, the author at the Blowhole in typically foul conditions. Tim Burke

dured a cold and unpleasant lunch. The sight of light snowflakes drifting lazily down the chimney was an incentive to get going.

The steep climb to the top of Helicopter Spur soon had our hearts thumping and our bodies warming up. As we approached Picture Point the fog lifted so that we could see Mt Clear to the south, raising our hopes for a pleasant afternoon. Alas, we were not to be so lucky; the weather deteriorated again shortly after we passed Picture Point and we were left floundering in deep snow and thick fog about one kilometre north of King Billy No 1.

Leaving Bluff Track here, we descended steadily along a north-easterly bearing through thick forest. Our intention was to follow the approximate position of the Australian Alps Walking Track and reach an obvious spur and saddle about one kilometre distant. We were conscious of keeping a safe distance from the escarpment to the north but found that we had no cause for concern as we skidded to a halt in a large clearing on the edge of the cliffs. Pushing on we passed through the saddle near the head of King Billy Creek and climbed only a short distance before pitching our tent, which allowed us a few hours to cook dinner before nightfall. Sitting behind a sheltering snow-wall we had built, I tried to imagine the views of the peaks, cliffs and valleys which are such an overwhelming feature of this region, but the fog kept the scenery at bay—I felt totally



isolated from civilisation; our modern outdoors equipment and pocket-size radio were our only links to the 1990s.

The fourth day dawned no different from the others we had experienced, with a layer of cloud enveloping the higher peaks. Within reach of Mt Howitt and our food cache near Vallejo Gantner Hut our thoughts were not so much on the weather on the quality of the food awaiting us. We breakfasted quickly and were soon packed and on our way. Unfortunately my leather ski boots were less than waterproof and they soaked up moisture like a sponge no matter how much Sno-seal I applied. They were frozen solid when I put them on and painfully uncomfortable until they thawed.

The spur swings to the east not far above our camp-site and on this occasion took on a strange appearance. On one side the ground falls away steeply into an escarpment; on the other, the forest ends about five metres short of the ridgetop. This created an avenue of snow along the ridge-line on which to climb. I had forgotten to attach my climbing skins to my skis, but the clear route and reasonably firm snow provided a good surface on which to grip. The climb up the final slope to Mt Magdala's summit was extremely steep, and fog

came into play yet again. Once we had climbed beyond the tree line there were no landmarks. We could have made similar progress had we been blindfolded!

We passed over the top and descended carefully on the eastern side but found that we made better progress by carrying our skis. The odd formation of Hells Window appeared below the cloud base and we were able to put on our skis again. For the first time since the Bluff, I was confident in dropping a few 'Teles' as I descended to the major saddle above Hellfire Creek. We sidled the northern flanks of a small knoll, then cursed the steady ascent up Big Hill. Leaving Tim and Michael grappling with the steep stuff I plodded on to the top. Suddenly I became aware that the cloud had risen high enough to see all the surrounding peaks and I indulged in a snack while taking in our first 360°



views since starting out; Mt Magdala to our immediate west, the bulk of Mt Howitt seemingly a stone's throw to the north-east, and we could even see the distant, upturned-saucer shape of Mt Reynard far to the south.

Within the next hour we were struggling up the final slope of Mt Howitt. With a sense of accomplishment we reached the summit—and a milestone in our trip. But we didn't linger long on top of the mountain and took off in the general direction of Macalister Springs as low clouds scudded once more over the ranges.

At the southern end of the Crosscut Saw we deviated to the east to follow a narrow spur which forms a sort of high bridge between the Mt Howitt plateau and the high country around Macalister Springs. Michael and Tim were less confident on the downhill sections than I—they fell behind as I schussed at high speed towards this 'bridge' at the head of the Macalister River. The food cache was now quite close and the thought of it seemed to give me a sudden burst of energy; almost as though I had been given a dose of adrenalin to keep me going. In the saddle I did not take time out to admire the superb vista of the Terrible Hollow and the Devils Staircase; I decided to push on to Vallejo Gantner Hut instead.

The hut was indeed a welcome sight and by the time my breathing had returned to normal I became aware of the absolute silence. I unclipped my skis, unbolted the door and staggered inside, my eyes adjusting slowly to the dark interior. I was relieved to find that the sleeping platform by the large window was vacant and I unrolled my mat and aired my sleeping-bag. Cursing and puffing outside the hut were the tell-tale sounds that Tim and Michael had arrived. As soon as we had dragged our food cache to the hut we set about eating all the good stuff; after four solid days of travelling in difficult conditions we were physically quite drained. Later we cooked a huge meal and spent a long time eating it. Evening settled over the Alps and we lingered contentedly by the warm, crackling fire. Eyelids drooped as the fire began to fade and with some amusement three sleepy, weary and overindulged men waddled off to bed.

Snow-dappled trees at first light indicated that there had been another snowfall. A tentative step outside revealed 20 centimetres of fresh snow but being a bit claggy it would not be conducive to easy turning—we would not be doing any sightseeing today; or would we? A sudden increase in the intensity of light in the hut around noon caught me unawares; the sun was out and for the first time since we had left Refrigerator Gap five days earlier I was anxious to get outside. While the sun was out, I told myself, I would make the most of it. Tim changed his mind about an excursion to Mt Howitt—a recurring knee injury his excuse—and Michael came only as far as the saddle overlooking the Terrible Hollow.

I took off for the Crosscut Saw. Above the tree line an immense cornice cut a sharp silhouette against the sky and attracted my attention. I skied to within a few metres of

its massive overhang and peered over the edge. There was an outrageously steep drop into the Terrible Hollow to the north-east which would provide some superb extreme skiing for anyone brave enough—or silly enough—to tackle it. I swung round and headed for Mt Howitt.

The snow surface on the plateau consisted of almost unskiable crud; a layer of wind-packed and ice-covered snow on top of a soggy base. I adopted a weird style of cross-country technique and was able to ski with some difficulty to the summit. I was rewarded with the wonderful views that we hadn't been able to see when we crossed the summit the day before. The view to the north was particularly impressive, with the jagged forms of Mt Cobbler and Mt Speculation dominating the background. Nearer at hand the white spine of the Crosscut Saw loomed like a tepee while further to the east the snow-capped, rocky summits of the Razor and the Viking stood out like islands in a sea of deep-blue ranges.

Returning to the hut was particularly frustrating. My skis refused to turn in the crud no matter how hard I tried and they had an overwhelming tendency to run in a straight line as though stuck in tramlines; at least I had been fortunate enough to snap a roll of film while the weather remained fine. After a good dinner the evening entertainment was provided by a mischievous native—a marsupial mouse—which defied gravity as it clambered around inside my expensive Gore-Tex jacket.

The on-again, off-again snow set in early in the morning and remained all day so there was little justification for venturing outside except when nature called. While it had been nice to have a few lazy days in the hut time for our return to the car was beginning to run out; we would have to leave Macalister Springs the following day regardless of the prevailing weather. I had my doubts about an easy crossing of the summit plateau of Mt Howitt if the blizzard continued as navigation on top would not be easy with the lack of substantial landmarks to guide us.

Late in the afternoon we replenished the supply of firewood and gathered enough food from our cache for three days. I felt pensive as the storm increased in intensity

during the evening, but a few mugs of port and red wine after tea eased my worries a little and induced a relaxing sleep.

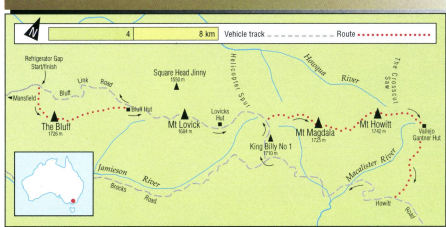
Strengthening wind during the night buffeted the window and occasionally the rattling disturbed me. By morning all was quiet but a peculiar, dim light was coming through the window. When wide awake I became aware that the window was covered in a layer of snow, allowing only a dull, diffuse light to pass through and creating a soundproof wall. I dressed in all my waterproof gear for a simple trip to the toilet and was surprised and concerned at the amount of fresh snow—fifty centimetres had fallen. It was very dry and the swirling wind was blowing spindrift in all directions. Inside the hut I relayed to the others my concerns at crossing Mt Howitt. We formulated a new return route, and packed up and prepared for 'Plan B'. What I couldn't have known then was that on our return to Melbourne I would write in my notebook: '30 August 1991 may well be remembered as the most gruelling day I have ever had on cross-country skis.' But that was still ahead of us.

Our new plan entailed skiing south from Macalister Springs towards the Howitt Plains. On intercepting the Howitt Road we would follow it west into the Macalister River valley and then take to another track up to a saddle south of King Billy No 2. We would then ski north to rejoin the route of our outward journey north of King Billy No 1. This route would be sheltered from the worst of the wind, would experience few problems with drifting snow, should provide reasonable visibility with continual tree cover and have major landmarks. Easy in theory; not so in practice!

Before we left, the three waterproof drums containing the remains of our food cache were replaced in their hiding-place a few hundred metres from the hut.

Within minutes of leaving the hut snow began balling up on the bases of our skis. (Balling snow occurs when ice forms on the ski base; snow then clings to the ice until it builds up into large lumps—often up to 10–15

The Bluff–Mt Howitt area



centimetres thick—and the result is that skis will not slide on the snow's surface.) This can become a major frustration for cross-country skiers and today was no exception. We cleared the ice from our ski bases and made steady progress over Clover Plain in the direction of View Point and the Howitt Road. We took turns at leading through the deep, dry powder snow until quite unexpectedly we came across the forma-

tion of the road about 500 metres further west than we had anticipated. Double-poling down the road I felt as though I had the toughest job, forging a trail for the others to follow. The surface of the snow began to improve as we steadily lost altitude and we were actually able to enjoy some glide as the Howitt Road zigzagged towards the Macalister River. The continual light snow became heavier as we descended and even down at the junction of Howitt Road and King Billy Track, at a height of only a little over 1000 metres, snow fell thickly.

At the junction we ate a few chocolate bars while we rested. A more substantial lunch was called for but the cold conditions convinced us that we shouldn't hang around for long.

We changed direction in the valley, took to the King Billy Track and soon came across one of the most bizarre sights we had ever encountered in the mountains. A feral cat had had some of its legs bitten off, revealing bloody stumps instead of paws. Fortunately for the cat, it was dead but obviously it hadn't been dead for long as no snow had settled on the fur. It was a disturbing encounter.

The snow became increasingly deep and dry further up the track and I was beginning to suffer from leg cramps. We continually changed the leading position but, again, balling snow on the ski bases was making any sort of striding hard work. It is not easy to describe the feeling of skiing with a build-up of snow on the base of your

skis; it would be somewhat like dragging a two kilogram weight on each leg. By late afternoon we were still well short of the saddle south of King Billy No 2 and it was apparent that our decision of taking only a light lunch had not been sensible. The track eventually topped out at the saddle and we immediately began to set up camp. The cold was numbing and permeated everything and to erect the tent with excruciatingly


Passing Helicopter Spur we swung southward and were started to meet two other skiers heading to Mt Howitt. Thanking them for providing a good set of tracks for us to follow, we pushed on to Lovicks Hut and for the second time consumed a quick lunch by the depressingly lifeless fireplace inside.

On the firm trail the going became noticeably easier and even the tiredness in my legs seemed to have vanished as we passed another group on the eastern shoulder of Mt Lovick. Improving visibility higher up meant that navigation over the summit area was much easier than on our outward trip. An uneventful but speedy descent to Bluff Hut was interrupted only by a group of skiers, arms linked, performing a group Telemark down a gentle slope. The resulting group crash at the bottom was worth seeing.

At Bluff Hut our generous hosts had returned and they offered us a hot drink. Late afternoon was fast approaching as we bid them farewell and headed down the 'old' road. This rough track runs almost parallel to the Sixteen Mile Road as it descends from Bluff Hut but as it did not have any wheel ruts in the snow, skiing downhill was possible. Even so, it was narrow and steep and resulted in numerous spills and head plants as we skidded, slipped and snowploughed our way down with little control.

Before too long we found ourselves striding along Bluff Link Road well below the cliffs of the Bluff. This section of track seemed to drag on and only the thought of hot food and a warm bed kept me going. A short rise in the track brought me to the snow-covered car park immediately below the Bluff. All that was left was a downhill cruise to the car and I finished the trip with a tired attempt at a Telemark turn. As luck would have it, there were now patches of blue breaking the monotony of overcast sky.

As I waited for Tim and Michael in the chill of a late winter evening I was able to reflect on our eight days high in the Victorian Alps. Not much had gone in our favour; the snow had been deep and awkward, the continual fog and cloud cover had created navigational problems, the extreme cold had seemed relentless, and it had snowed on each of the eight days we had been out. But somehow I was not disappointed. There was a certain satisfaction in having endured the inhospitable conditions and in experiencing the snow country in weather for which it is renowned.

On returning to Melbourne I was unable to sleep. But sitting by the radiator until 4 am, memories of the foul conditions and extreme hardships faded quickly and I found myself busily poring over maps in preparation for the next big ski trip. 

The most useful maps for this journey and for the surrounding area are the *Howitt-Selwyn* 1:50 000 and *Buller South* 1:25 000 Vicmap sheets.

Glen van der Knijff is a keen bushwalker, cross-country skier and alpine historian. A qualified cartographer, he has worked for Victorian map and guidebook publisher Algona Publications. He spent eight years at *VWd* before joining the staff at *Lonely Planet* early this year.



Reluctantly leaving Bluff Hut in blizzard conditions. *van der Knijff*

I de-iced my skis yet again near Picture Point and found that I had immediate success—the snow no longer balled up. Snow had also ceased to fall and suddenly the skiing became significantly easier.



Paradise LO

Two long-time conservationists recall the vanished treasures of South Gippsland.
By *Jill Redwood*

wild conservation



ST?

What image comes to mind when we hear the word 'conservationist'? A bushwalker who recycles paper and glass or a hippy adorned with dreadlocks and body ornaments chained to a bulldozer? Whether it's a high-powered lobbyist or a tree planter, few of us picture a conservationist being on the seasoned side of seventy.

Cousins Jock Greenaway and Norrie Rossiter have both seen eight decades pass in the verdant country of Victoria's South Gippsland. They were born at a time when the only skyscrapers were the giant forest trees; trees which have since been cleared to make way for the agricultural land that now covers the region.

Throughout their lives Jock and Norrie have had an intimate understanding and love of their bush and coastal environment. A plan to develop the Yanakie bushlands adjoining Wilsons Promontory in the 1950s prompted them to speak out and champion the conservation cause at a time when 'conservationist' was a dirty word to most people. A decade later they were instrumental in preventing a licensed motel from being built near Tidal River on the Prom. The latest scheme to turn this National Park into a commercial resort (see *Wild* no 64, page 21) has again angered Jock and Norrie.

'I'm disgusted with the whole show', said Norrie. This government is completely out

builders. The house has a comfortable affinity with the giant pittosporum which shades the front verandah, a sign of the land's rainforest origins. Inside, home-tanned calf skins are draped over the old armchairs and ancient portraits in oval frames look down over the lounge room. As a human habitat, it has evolved slowly in its 100-year history; faddish new conveniences and renovations were superfluous embellishments and as such were ignored.

were king parrots, rainbow and scaly-breasted lorikeets in the forests; greater gliders up in the overstorey and potoroos lived amongst the silver tussocks underneath. There were bandicoots and brush-tailed phascogales.' Their inventory showed that they were well acquainted with the wildlife that thrived in these forests. It is sad that many creatures have now become extinct in this region. Jock then talked of the wildlife which had died out before he was born.



Above, South Gippsland pioneers and conservationists Jock Greenaway, left, and Norrie Rossiter. *Ted Lovegrove.* **Left,** Greenaway still lives at 'Fern Tree Vale', built from timber cut on the property shortly before this 1891 photo was taken. *Greenaway collection.* **Right and page 46 main photo,** shining gums and Gippsland waratah, Rodger River, East Gippsland. *Grant Da Costa.* **Page 46 small photo,** shining gums and sassafras rainforest, Errinundra area, East Gippsland. *Da Costa.* **Page 47,** all our yesterdays... aftermath of clear-felling near Mt Baw Baw, central Gippsland. *Em Mainka*

of touch with what National Parks are all about. It makes me furious.'

Jock and Norrie have a store of priceless treasures and information of the area. Jock was born in 1914; Norrie, soon after. In 1876 their great-grandparents, Margaret and John Hodgson, pioneered a run of 120 acres (about 50 hectares) at Hedley. This prime grazing country was once covered by thick 'jungle' and enormous trees.

Jock's house is the original dwelling which his grandparents built in the 1890s from the giant trees that grew on their run. It has the feel of wood that's taken root again. The history and secrets of those weather-worn boards seem to predate its

We sat in the old, cosy armchairs and ate dinner on our knees by the open fire. Jock and Norrie began their recollections by describing the country as they first knew it.

'Like twilight it was, surrounded on all sides by 300 foot (100 metre) tall blue gums and yellow stringybarks.' The plants they listed would have formed the rainforests and wet sclerophyll forests which have all but disappeared now: musk, hazel, blackwoods, clematis, wonga wonga vine, tree ferns and all varieties of mosses and lichens which festooned the understorey.

'When our mothers were children, flocks of lyre-birds would come and eat with the chooks at feed time', Jock recalled. 'There

'The native cats [tiger quoll] were a chestnut colour and mainly spotted on the tail. Dad said they came out in the evenings and ran along the post-and-rail fences by the bush. The smaller native cats without spotted tails [eastern quoll] used to be around too. [They are now extinct on the mainland.] There were packs of dingoes they said disappeared about 1910. Around this time the quolls died out as well. There seemed to be sudden extinctions with a lot of the native animals. The paddymelons liked the swampy land and they also just vanished within a short time.'

The big grey kangaroos and the broilgas were coastal animals. Broilgas, which liked





NOTICE TIMBER HARVESTING OPERATIONS

Timber harvesting operations are being undertaken in this forest.

A person shall not wilfully enter and remain within any timber harvesting area within the meaning of the Forests (Part IV Miscellaneous) Regulations 1969 for the purpose of or with the effect of obstructing, hindering or impeding any timber harvesting operations authorised under the Forests Act 1958.

A person shall not remain within any timber harvesting area when directed by an Authorised Officer to leave the Area.

Penalty - not more than \$2,000.



the open, grassy plains, died out last century. Koalas were very common in South Gippsland but were shot for their fur.

The locals massacred koalas in huge numbers to make pocket money from selling the skins to Russia. After this, the koala had mostly disappeared by about 1914 when I was born. As kids we'd hear the odd ones fighting and screaming at night.'

The small populations that did manage to hang on in the hills were wiped out in the disastrous 1942 fires.

'You'd see these blackened lumps in the treetops. Koalas are now as rare as hen's teeth. You could ride all day on Snake Island and not see one', said Norrie. The demise of the koala in South Gippsland is also thanks to 'bulldozer mania' as he calls it. 'I haven't seen a koala around this area for a very long time', said Jock, 'and this plan to clear the cameo-sized bits of bush which remain for blue-gum plantations will wipe out the few survivors.' Jock was referring to Amcor's proposal to clear 2000 hectares of native forest to establish stands of plantation timber.

Then the 1080 poison blitz on rabbits in the 1960s cleaned up the whistling eagles, wedgies, peregrine- and little falcons. They were all poisoned from eating the rabbits....'

Jock and Norrie recalled endless species with which they'd been familiar but which have vanished. Nankeen night herons were common but are rare now. After the wetlands were drained, the bitterns, crakes



Like two old soldiers lamenting the needless destruction of war, their bleak story continued. With the help of rabbits, the native orchids of the country were eaten away. Norrie remembers wild flowers so thick that they covered the grasslands as far as he could see. 'What English pastures and superphosphatol didn't kill, the rabbits finished off.' In 1930 Norrie and his sister counted 50 different orchids on his family's 120 hectare property. I asked how many were left there now. 'I nurtured two species here in the house garden—that's all that's left.'

Norrie's mother loved all creatures. She had great knowledge of the local natural history and would send newly discovered

seen at various times in the Waratah Bay area. Its vast scrub lands have since been cleared for farming although there are still infrequent—if sceptically received—sightings of thylacines today. (The scientific view is that these fascinating carnivorous marsupials have been absent from mainland Australia for more than 1000 years and were hunted to extinction in Tasmania in the 1930s.)

Jock's and Norrie's generation and that of their parents have witnessed both the unblemished beauty and the systematic demolition of these natural landscapes. Surely there are lessons to be learned from the unrestrained exploitation of the past. Jock's 82 years of observing human nature have

Left, 'welcome to walkers', Errinundra Plateau. *Da Costa.* Above, 'Don't worry, it all re-generates.' (Failed regeneration—mostly silver wattle—Errinundra.) *Right*, they're not taking matchsticks, Errinundra. *Malinka*

and rails vanished. The sooty owl (then called the delicate owl) followed the long line of native species that have faded from existence in this region. The tall, old forests also supported barking- and powerful owls. Emus would 'roam in healthy numbers'. But these, too, succumbed to human exploitation and senseless destruction.

Jock and Norrie remember the population of emus that survived on Snake Island just north-east of the Prom. 'The emus were soon killed off to provide plumes to decorate the hats of our soldiers.' He then added wryly, '...while they killed off each other'.

There was one, lone emu left on Gellion's run. A group of louts cornered it and tied it to a horse's tail to tow home. The horse panicked and fled, and the poor creature was kicked to bits. When the horse got home there were only the emu's remains left.' After a moment's reflection on that appalling incident, Jock added: 'Times haven't changed, have they—only the louts are in Parliament now.'



orchids to the herbarium for classification. She was conversant with all things associated with the native bushland. The families also shared artistic talents. Norrie's sisters Lanie, Nea and Else documented orchids with crayons and ink while Jock's mother was a talented painter. But as was the case with so many capable women, marriage soon eclipsed these abilities when farming duties and raising families became the priorities of life.

Jock remembers his mother telling them about a strange animal she'd seen when she was out riding. This was about 1930. 'It resembled a cross between a dog and a baboon, and was down in the hindquarters. It had a sorrowful look on its face and scared a steady old horse that never took flight at anything.'

They believe this was a thylacine (Tasmanian tiger). These were reported to be

given him a good deal of judicious insight. When asked whether anything has changed in the way our natural heritage is treated, Jock's considered response was, 'the only thing that's changed is our improved ability to destroy things'.

Looking as worn as the old armchair into which he had sunk, Norrie declared that it's infuriating to listen to politicians. 'They've always got a glib argument to justify their own stupidity.' He then added: 'If I was 50 years younger I'd be fighting like hell, but we have to leave it up to the young ones now.' 🐼

Jill Redwood has lived in East Gippsland for 16 years and has been active in the campaign to protect the region's old-growth forests for 13 years. She coordinates the local environment group, edits a newsletter on East Gippsland environmental issues and runs tours of the threatened forests. In 1996 she was awarded the inaugural *Warr* Environmentalist of the Year Award.

The FLINDERS

A Wild feature on these spectacular South Australian mountains



RANGES

a desert masterpiece

The Flinders Ranges have inspired adventurers and artists for almost 200 years. By *Quentin Chester*

I first saw the Flinders Ranges from the vinyl back seat of our family's Holden EJ station-wagon. Although the details of the trip are hazy (I was around five or six years old at the time) I do recall the musty rooms at the Wilmington Hotel where the bed sheets were starched as stiff as cardboard. I also remember long drives with the EJ bucking through creek-beds shaded by big river red gums. On the horizon there stood hills unlike any I'd ever seen, with rocky crests as jagged and rust-coloured as the old bush saws in my Dad's shed.

It was more than a decade before I again headed north from Adelaide, yet those first impressions have always stayed with me. At that stage I had no idea that, through a tangle of associations and experience, this landscape would come to influence my life in ways I'm still trying to understand.

In this, it seems, I'm not alone. Over the decades the Flinders Ranges have regularly seized the imagination of onlookers. The ranges are an intensely visual place. The clarity of the light, the serrated ridges and rich, burnished colours are different from anything found east of Broken Hill. In recent decades the Flinders Ranges have become a popular destination for bushwalkers and other adventurers seeking the essence of the inland Australian landscape.

It is hardly surprising that the shapes and moods of this country figure so prominently in the stories of the Aboriginal people who occupied the region. At the time of European settlement seven tribal or language groups inhabited the Flinders. The descendants of four of these groups are now known as the Adnyamathanha people.

The Elder Range and Moralana valley from Dick Nob, Wilpena Pound. *Grant Da Costa*



Their history includes accounts of Akurra the huge serpent, an all-powerful creator and guardian. According to the stories the signs of Akurra are evident in the places where he drank lakes dry, deposited eggs and carved out gorges and waterholes deep in the ranges. More than intriguing legends or accounts of the formation of the land, these stories hold important beliefs and intuitions about the country and its rhythms. It is significant, for instance, that Akurra is omnipresent as the guardian of waterholes and the bringer of rains and of new life.

The first Europeans to see the ranges, while not entirely immune to their spectacle, found the country bleak and forbidding. The earliest records are in the log and charts of Matthew Flinders, in command of HMS *Investigator* on its voyage of discovery in 1802. He noted 'a ridge of high, rocky, and barren mountains'. A small party led by his botanist Robert Brown climbed a prominent peak (east of the present-day township of Port Augusta) that was later named in his honour. Based on Brown's reports, Flinders noted that 'a dead, uninteresting, flat country everywhere presented itself'.

It was a fleeting encounter and Flinders was not to know that the 'ridge' he described was part of something much larger and more intricate. In fact, the collection of ranges that bear his name sweep north for more than 400 kilometres, linking the wheat- and sheep country of South Australia's mid-north to the arid range lands of the continent's interior.

For all their immediate impact, the Flinders can be an elusive, even baffling place. Distances are at times difficult to judge and the terrain often presents contradictory facets. On one side of a ridge you can find lean, rocky slopes dotted with saltbush while on the other there might be a fertile valley with dense stands of native pines and eucalypts. And hidden deep in the twists and turns of the ranges are mossy gorges, deep waterholes fringed by reeds and strange stone formations.

The pastoralists and settlers of colonial South Australia had to contend not only with the mysteries of this landscape but also with a rash of speculation about an inland sea and fertile frontier to the north. No one wrestled with this harder than Edward John Eyre. In May 1839 he headed north and on

this, the first of three expeditions, he wrote that 'the ranges rose in lofty broken outline, tier behind tier of very rocky appearance as far as the eye could see'.

Though subsequent forays did little to dispel Eyre's impression that the ranges were desolate and barren, he was taunted by the prospect of lapping waters in the vast salt lakes beyond. He wrote: 'The extraordinary deception caused by mirage and refraction...in these regions makes it impossible to believe the evidence of one's own eyesight.'

Confusion about the nature of these white 'lakes' would persist for almost two decades. In the meantime pastoralists straggled further north, bringing large mobs of sheep and cattle to the seemingly bountiful, grassy plains that intersperse the ranges. However, by the mid-1860s a deception of another kind altered forever the way this stretch of country was regarded. For three harrowing years the rains never came. Several hundred thousand head of livestock perished and many squatters were forced to abandon their runs. No group suffered more than the dispossessed Aborigines, whose traditional sources of food and water had already been ravaged by the arrival of settlers and their stock, not to mention the effects of 'civilisation'.

When the drought finally broke in January 1866 massive floods engulfed the northern Flinders, highlighting the effects of an erratic boom-and-bust climate cycle that are felt

rockclimbing in the flinders

On paper the Moonarie rockclimb Outside Chance hardly seems the stuff of legend. It is barely 50 metres long and has a relatively modest grade of 16. Yet the sensations of sidling up its horizontal edges in the winter sunshine and gazing into the plunging space below epitomise what makes the experience of climbing on the rim of Wilpena Pound unique.

With so much warm, inviting rock on display in the Flinders Ranges it was only a matter of time before the tiros of the Climbing Club of South Australia ventured northwards. Wilpena Pound was the obvious starting-point. The first recorded climbs were completed on St Mary Peak in 1965. There were further exploratory trips to Point Bonney and Rawnley Bluff over the next three years before the discovery of a singularly impressive band of vertical cliff just south of Moonarie Gap.

While there is an abundance of rock throughout the region much of it is loose or broken up by ledges. At Moonarie, however, the highly resistant Rawnley quartzite is stacked in favour of technical climbing with walls 100 metres high interspersed by buttresses and mighty corners. Many of these were climbed during an initial flurry of activity in the late 1960s when protagonists including Richard Horn, Stuart Fishwick, George Adams and Doug McLean established classic routes such as Pagoda, Nervine and Orion.

Other climbing areas may be higher, have more difficult climbs or easier access (there is a stiff, 30-minute walk up to the foot of the cliff) but for sheer atmosphere Moonarie has few equals. The rich colours, extreme exposure and views out across empty plains and distant ranges generate a robust sense of place that seems to affect even the most hardened, ego-captive climber.

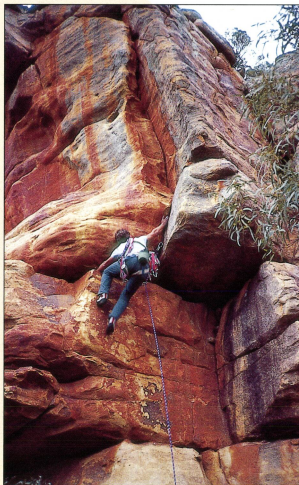
And there is no shortage of intrigue on the cliff itself. For three decades Moonarie has continued to yield high-standard routes. Ad-

vances in gear and technique during the 1970s led to the rehabilitation of such lines as Miles from Nowhere and a push to embrace the cliff's open walls and steep aretes with climbs including Pine Crack, Downwind of Angels and Icarus.

Over the years there has not been a more daring or devout disciple of Moonarie than local legend Colin Reece. Either alone or in the company of enthusiasts like Eddie Ozols he has pioneered many fine climbs and shown a willingness to respond to the cliff's more exotic formations with a succession of outlandish arete- and roof climbs.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the cliff was also given a work-over by interstate visitors, who wiped out the lingering aid moves on many established routes and drew attention to neglected areas—the Great Wall, for example. The evolving tactics of preparing routes and placing fixed protection brought seemingly bare walls into contention. Kim Carrigan, the Shepherd family and others gave Moonarie a contemporary flavour with creations like Goblin Mischief and Endless Love.

This trend has accelerated in the past decade in the hands of a loyal band of local climbers—including Stuart Williams, who has forged a series of impressive routes of grade 25-plus. Yet as even the most grade-conscious pilgrim will tell you, at Moonarie the numbers tell only part of the story.



as strongly in the Flinders as anywhere on the continent. Even today, locals and visitors are caught out by flash floods and widespread summer rains that can cut roads and strand travellers for a week or more. At the other extreme even normally reliable waterholes can dry up during lean years, making extended bushwalks risky undertakings.

Given the hardships faced throughout the 19th century it's no wonder that the region gained a reputation as a confronting and at times alien frontier. Yet over the generations, as settlements grew and the local population began to form close attachments to the land, the Flinders came to be seen on its own terms.

This new appreciation found its keenest expression in the work of the painter Hans Heysen. Accustomed to the pastoral charms of the Adelaide Hills, Heysen was at first overwhelmed by the austerity of the Flinders. 'Fine big simple forms against clear transparent skies and a sense of spaciousness everywhere', he wrote. 'But it is all so distinct from our own surroundings that it puzzled me what to do with it.'

However, after Heysen's second visit in 1927 he launched into one of the most exhilarating phases of his prodigious artistic life. Though an unashamed realist he found in the brash light and austere structures of the Flinders subjects as compelling as anything in the modernist pantheon. Today it is hard to imagine the impact of works like *The Three Sisters of Aroona* and *Guardian of the Brachina Gorge* at the time. With their muscular hills and blunt, stone ramparts cast in hues of ochre, mauve and bronze, these were unlike any paintings previously seen in this country.

Heysen's work spawned a legion of imitators but his artistic legacy is perhaps most evident in the work of photographers—including a contemporary, Harold Casneaux, and recent practitioners such as Bernd Stoecker.

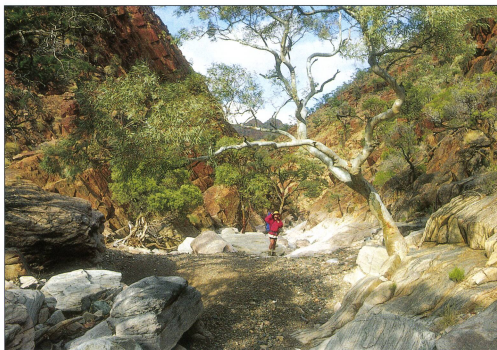
Heysen's influence also spread far beyond the art world. During the 1940s a young chemical engineer named Warren Bonython was stirred into action by one of Heysen's most inspiring paintings, *The Land of the Oratunga*. In 1945 Bonython made the first of many journeys north, travelling on the old Ghan and arriving in the dead of night at the Brachina siding. His first glimpse of the Flinders as he parted the tent flap the next morning sparked an enduring passion for the landscape. He later wrote: 'I was at once intrigued by the skyline profiles, fascinated by the warm reds of rock-faces grading into blue and purple distances and excited by the steep and rugged mountains themselves.'

For the next three years Bonython led walking expeditions which delved into the rugged and little-known Gammon Ranges. Then, in separate stages between May 1967 and November 1968, he completed the first recorded traverse of the ranges from Crystal Brook to Mt Hopeless. (In August 1996 Bonython—at the age of 80—led a walk commemorating the first crossing of the Gammons 50 years earlier.)

While Hans Heysen celebrated the fierce nobility of the ranges—mostly as seen from afar—the experiences of bushwalkers over the past 50 years have helped to develop more intimate affiliations with the region. By immersing themselves in the country individuals like Warren Bonython and groups such as the Adelaide Bushwalkers have brought to wider notice the nuances

seen as an aloof frontier but instead as a place where nature and culture are closely intertwined.

Given these new perspectives it is hardly surprising that there have been calls for greater conservation of the region. The establishment of the Flinders Ranges National Park in the 1970s was largely a recognition of the box-office appeal of Wilpena



Balancing Rock Creek is typical of many Flinders Ranges creeks. Left, the sort of rock that attracts climbers from all over Australia; David Wagland on Billy the Kid (grade 19), Goat Crag, Moonarie. *Quentin Chester*

of the terrain—the networks of creeks, ridges, waterholes and gorges. The extent of this understanding is reflected in assorted guidebooks such as Bonython's *Walking the Flinders Ranges* and in the long process of establishing the Heysen Trail, a walking track some 330 kilometres long which stretches from Crystal Brook to Parachilna Gorge.

As well as such topographical insights, there have been other revelations that have heightened popular feeling for the Flinders. Not the least of these is a long overdue recognition of the land's Aboriginal associations. Most notable have been the efforts of the people of Nepabunna to work with Dorothy Tunbridge in the preparation of her books on Adnyamathanha culture, *Flinders Ranges Dreaming* and *The Story of the Flinders Ranges Mammals*.

At the same time there has been growing awareness of geological and biological riches—everything from fossils of the world's earliest multicellular life to the complex mosaic of plant- and animal communities scattered through the ranges. Graham Medlin's detailed and fascinating *Field Guide to Chambers Gorge* is a striking example of the possibilities when somebody really comes to grips with the landscape. No longer are the Flinders Ranges

Pound and its surrounds. Safeguarding the more remote and obscure Gammon Ranges proved far more difficult. It took almost 20 years of lobbying, negotiations and protests for the creation of a meaningful park which includes both the dramatic gorge- and range country and an ecologically significant belt of Mitchell grass plain extending to Lake Frome.

Despite these achievements large tracts of the ranges remain unprotected. One has only to look north-east from the summits of Mt Hayward in the Heysen Range or Mt Painter in the Arkaroola region to appreciate the extent and compelling character of the country that lies outside park boundaries. Alas, proposals for a truly cohesive system of parks and reserves have made little headway.

Almost 30 years ago, for example, Warren Bonython put forward the idea for a large 'Scenic Preserve' encompassing the elevated country along the entire length of the Flinders Ranges. Even those who might struggle to grasp the conservation merits of such a scheme would have to acknowledge the cultural and economic stimulus some form of larger 'preserve' could bring. During the past decade, however, the focus has largely been on dubious, resort-style developments rather than on securing the future of natural assets. But recent events may stir interest in the long-term prospects for the Flinders.

When the calicivirus escaped from Wang Island in October 1995 the Flinders Ranges were among the first areas to benefit. It is estimated that nearly four

heysen's hills

Day walks in the Flinders Ranges,
by Grant Da Costa

million rabbits have been eliminated from the region. This, combined with a wet winter and summer rains, has transformed the country. Large areas of formerly denuded country now bristle with new growth including many shrubs and rarely seen seedlings—and there are signs that populations of small, native mammals are also thriving with the decline of feral competitors and predators.

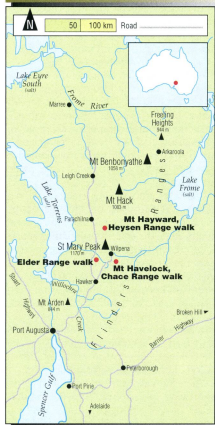
Coinciding with these grassroots changes, the *Native Title Act* has led to overlapping native title claims covering a large expanse of the ranges. It is too early to assess what impact these claims will have but they provide an opportunity to see the future of the Flinders from another angle. The Adnyamathanha people have already had an active role in the Gammon Ranges National Park. It may well be that, as in the Northern Territory, cooperative management might apply to a much larger area.

These are timely reminders of the natural and cultural vitality of the region. They suggest that more inclusive and creative approaches have to be agreed upon to care for the country. For just as the future of the Flinders should not be seen in terms of five-star amenities, neither can it be envisaged simply as a grander, green shape on a map. Fortunately, history shows that the ranges have always given people the power to imagine. 📍

Quentin Chester (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) writes regularly about going bush. He is the co-author of *The Outdoors Companion*, *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone* and is at present working on a book which explores the diversity of 28 Australian islands from the tropics to the sub-Antarctic.



Flinders Ranges



The Flinders Ranges are an ancient landscape, dry and mountainous. Summers are baking hot, winters are cool, and after rain the ranges bloom. Some parts are popular with walkers; others exist in solitude and silence. To my mind the place is peerless and the possibilities for walking are endless.

The region has three National Parks: Mt Remarkable, Flinders Ranges, and Gammon Ranges. All have great walking, but so do

the vast stretches of country between the parks. The most famous section is within the Flinders Ranges National Park, which encompasses the icon of Wilpena Pound. Many sets of track notes have been written about the Pound and its highest point, St Mary Peak—and deservedly so. But surrounding the Pound is a series of mountain chains including the Chace, Elder and Heysen Ranges. The spirit of this country was first captured in a brilliant series of

paintings by Hans Heysen during the late 1920s. If it was good enough for Heysen to paint, surely it must be worth a visit on foot. The following track notes explore just a few possibilities—I'm quite sure you won't be disappointed.

● When to go

The walking season extends from May to October. At other times conditions are usually too hot and dry, with high risk of fire. The climate in late autumn and early

● Warnings

The heat of the sun and a lack of water are the major hazards when walking in dry areas such as the Flinders Ranges. A hat, sunscreen and full water-bottles are essential. Some of the terrain is steep, loose and rocky, therefore strong footwear is recommended. Prickly spinifex is common—gaiters are the best protection. Competence with map and compass is necessary to complete these walks. Rain may make vehicle access difficult if not impossible.

● Maps

The relevant 1:50 000 South Australian Department of Lands map is mentioned in the text for each walk.

● Access and camping

Flinders Ranges National Park is 530 kilometres north of Adelaide. The nearest major town is Hawker, 40 kilometres south of the National Park boundary.

The closest places to use as base camps for the walks are the Rawnsley Park (phone [08] 8648 0008) and Wilpena ([08] 8648 0004) camping grounds. Both are commercially operated. Wilpena camping ground is on the northern side of Wilpena Pound while Rawnsley Park is three kilometres west of the Hawker–Wilpena road near the Pound's southern wall. Camping facilities and basic supplies are available at both. Holiday times and long weekends are often busy.

There are other basic camp-sites further north in the National Park. You can pay for these sites and organise permits for overnight walking at the park office in Hawker (phone [08] 8648 4244) during

normal business hours. Fees are not charged nor are permits needed for day walks.

● The walks

1 Mt Havelock, Chace Range. The Wilpena map covers this walk. Although only four kilometres return and with an altitude gain of 360 metres it is graded 'hard' because of the extremely broken terrain. Such rough country makes it difficult to describe the route exactly, so these track notes should only be used as an approximate guide.

The Chace Range is a razor-back of richly coloured sandstone riddled with sheer rock walls. Some walls run for kilometres and block off whole valleys which lie in their paths. The contrast between the smooth faces of these walls and the tortuous sections of broken rock creates an awe-inspiring landscape.

The walk begins at a cattle-grid 12 kilometres east along the Martins Well road from the Hawker–Wilpena road (grid reference 845956). Mt Havelock is at a bearing of 159° magnetic from the cattle-grid (don't get too close to the grid or the fence as the metal will affect the compass reading). The walk passes up the gully to the right (west) of Mt Havelock (at 165° magnetic). A large rock wall with a slot in it can be seen blocking the gully.

Walk along the west side of the fence, heading for the gully. Once there ascend the gully—at times in its depths and occasionally venturing on to its flanks. After passing several lower walls you will reach the enormous wall that can be seen from the road.

About 30 metres left of the gully's middle is a gap in the wall through which you can reach the top of the range. However, before heading through the gap walk up east along the base of the rock wall for about 50 metres past the gap, then cross over to a rocky outcrop to the north of the wall. (It is actually the end of a smaller wall in front of the main one.) The top is easily gained and the view is incredible.

Return to the gap in the main wall and pass up through it. Continue in the gully for 30 metres, then leave it by going left up a very steep and loose—but quite open—slope. This leads to a low rock wall. Follow the base of the wall up to the left until you reach the top of the spur, then keep going up to a second wall. Again, follow this wall up to the left to a low section where it ends.

Ascend directly to the ridgetop.

You should emerge at a magnificent spot with an outlook along the curving, rugged crest of the range to the west. Turn east along the ridge crest and ascend to the summit cairn on Mt Havelock.

The return route is by way of the next gully to the east, but do not walk east along the crest of the range because the walls become impassable. Instead, from the summit of Mt Havelock walk north out on to a ridge. Keep crossing walls and gently



Looking south along the Heysen Range to Wilpena Pound from Mt Hayward. *Da Costa*

the walks at a glance

GRADE Hard (although short)

LENGTH One day

TYPE Rocky peaks and gullies

REGION Central South Australia

BEST TIME

Spring or autumn

SPECIAL POINTS

Beware of heat and lack of water.

Permits required if bush camping

winter is pleasant. In midwinter the temperatures can often fall to zero at night but the days are crisp. Early spring is popular because wild flowers abound although the display varies depending on the extent of the winter rains.

descending until you come to a valley broader than the others—about 20 metres wide—which near its top is flanked by high walls on both sides. The valley is densely wooded with mallee, cypress pines and shrubs—much more than those crossed before. Don't be tempted to swing to the east any earlier as the slopes which descend into the main gully rapidly become too steep.

When through the last of the rock walls, head left (west) out of the gully and contour round the spur until your vehicle comes into view, then make your way back to the start of the walk along the creek system and across open hillsides.

2 Elder Range. The *Moralana* map covers this 12 kilometre return walk graded 'hard' because of the 450 metre gain in altitude and some steep, loose slopes.

It is impossible to travel from Hawker to Wilpena without being impressed by the pervading presence of the Elder Range, so it is natural to climb one of its high points.

The summit reached on this walk is more than 600 metres above the surrounding plains. Although 365 metres below the highest point in the Elder Range—Mt Aleck—the views of Wilpena Pound, the *Moralana* valley and the western plains including Lake Torrens are breathtaking. And it has a unique advantage: a magnificent, edge-on view of the Elder Range culminating in the pointy summit of Mt Aleck, something you can't see when standing on that fascinating peak.

The walk begins 24 kilometres north-west along the *Moralana* Scenic Drive from the Hawker-Wilpena road (grid reference 594036). There is a sharp, right-hand turn in the road immediately before it crosses Watercress Creek. Nearby are a rough shack and a stockyard.

Start by heading south beside *Moralana* Creek. Cross a fence, then change to the west bank to make end up on the smaller tributary which leads south to the Elder Range.

The tributary ducks through a gap in a chain of low hills (grid reference 589028). An old vehicle track crosses the creek near here. If you miss this track it can be picked up near the west bank of the creek after the gap. It allows easy walking along the top of a low ridgeline.

Continue along the track until you are opposite a rocky little hill (grid reference 578994). The hill has a low saddle on either side. Head straight across the foothills towards the southern saddle. Drop into the creek system, then ascend a steep gully to reach the saddle (grid reference 579993).

Climb the range to the south by way of the back (west side) of the ridge. Plot a

steadily rising route aiming at the first apparent low point on the ridgetop.

Once on top, follow the crest of the range. There are several rock walls, all readily climbed or bypassed. Keep going to the 730 metre peak (grid reference 580981)—there is an uninterrupted view south down the Elder Range to Mt Aleck. Return the same way.

3 Mt Hayward, Heysen Range. The *Oraparinna* map covers this walk which, although only eight kilometres return, is graded 'hard' because of the 485 metre gain in altitude and the steep ascent.

The section of the Heysen Range around and south of Mt Hayward presents an unbroken rampart of cliffed peaks towering over steep foothills and the Aroona valley. There are outstanding views from the crest of the range north-west over the tangled country around Mt Barbara, south to Wilpena Pound, and west over the plains to Lake Torrens.

The walk begins at the Aroona valley camping ground at the northern end of the National Park. A permit is required to camp overnight. Fresh water is available here. The camping ground is 52 kilometres north of Wilpena by way of the Blinman road and Oraparinna; or 49 kilometres by way of the more scenic but slower route through the Bunyeroc valley.

Start walking at the junction of the main road and the camping ground entrance road (grid reference 694368). Head west along the only major creek. About 100 metres after the first bend take the left fork and follow the creek in a generally western direction towards the hills. The objective is the top of the range at the distinctive, cliff-free saddle (grid reference 672363) north-north-east of Walkandi Peak.

The many forks in the creek become confusing as you approach the foothills. The most common error is to end up too far south in a creek not marked on the map (at grid reference 683365). The correct channel passes through the foothills (grid reference 683367) and opens into a hidden valley. Once in the valley follow the creek west. Walkandi Peak and the saddle are visible from here.

Head towards a dark patch of native pines below the saddle using suitable creek gullies and spurs. A very steep ascent eventually leads up through a pass in the cliffline to the crest of the range.

From the saddle, contour round to the base of Walkandi Peak which can be readily climbed away from the main ridgeline. South from Walkandi Peak is easy walking through beautiful, wooded glades along the ridge crest to the summit of Mt Hayward.

If you continue south beyond the summit you will see breathtaking views over the cliffs of South Mt Hayward and the rest of the Heysen Range to Wilpena Pound. Return the same way. 

Grant De Costa is a well-known wilderness photographer, a keen bushwalker and the author of *Car Touring and Bushwalking in East Gippsland*. For more than a decade his wilderness photographs from around Australia have been regularly featured in calendars, diaries, books and posters.

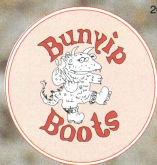


A walker is dwarfed by Streak Gorge in the Gammon Ranges. *Chester*

Turn east and begin the fairly easy—although long and progressively steepening—descent into the main gully.

Follow the main gully north down through some lovely sections of boulder-strewn creek and past more stunning rock walls. Eventually you will emerge on to the top of a high, seemingly impassable wall which blocks the whole valley. Cross over a small spur to the left (west) and, remarkably, you will find an easy bypass of the rock wall which can be followed down for quite a distance before you are required to re-enter the main gully.

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BEYOND THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

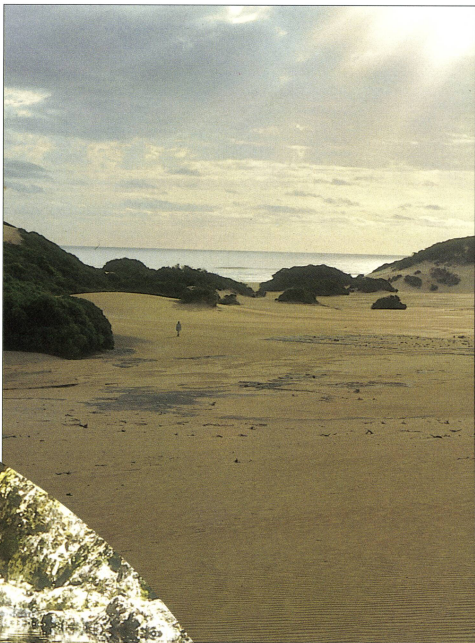
Bob Brown takes us on a trip through the Tarkine wilderness of north-west Tasmania



the trackless Norfolk Range on Tasmania's north-west coast is notorious for its scrub. Not just thick scrub but a particular entanglement of bauera, banksia, cutting grass and melaleuca—enough to deter walkers from ever going back again. So when Paul Thomas and I set out two days after Christmas to find a scrub-free route from the central Tarkine to the west coast, we went by way of Mts Edith, Hadmar and Sunday—east of the spine of the Norfolk Range proper.

Our approach was justified. Except for a few pack-wrenching episodes on either side of the top of Mt Hadmar our 90 kilometre return trip—which included a 20 kilometre stroll down the white beaches between the Lagoon and Interview Rivers—was a spectacular success.

Right, the Tarkine's wonderful wild beaches—at Hunters Creek. **Bob Brown**. **Below left**, Bob Brown at Lagoon River. **Paul Thomas**. **Below right**, Brown on Mt Sunday. Mt Norfolk is in the middle and Mt Edith on the right in the background. *Thomas*. **Pages 60 and 61**, the 'road to nowhere', from Mt Edith. *Brown*



Tarkine area





After leaving the ugly scar of the \$34 million Heemskirk 'road to nowhere', which was bulldozed across the wilderness by the State Government in 1995–96, we didn't meet anyone. The mountains we traversed provided grandstand views from Bass Strait to Cradle Mountain and Barn Bluff and, southwards, to the West Coast Range beyond Queens-town.

During our walk we were under daily surveillance by a pair of huge Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles. In the headwaters of Hunters Creek the male eagle made repeated overflights. At one stage it flew in from the north like a Vulcan bomber, levelling out to land on the ground just 30 metres away. It scrutinised us (dinner?), preened itself, fluffed its russet nape feathers, then took off to the south.

The beach hinterland was full of wild-life. Further inland we saw many attractive ground parrots and emu wrens and, atop Mt Sunday, a tiny field of that amazing, purple, alpine wonder-flower, the hewardia.

My descent of Mt Sunday was agony. I was too small for my boots. Blisters—the bushwalker's bane—appeared but donning three pairs of socks, dunking my feet and boots in every waterhole, and the application of lanolin (lip salve) twice a day reversed the trend.

Paul took the bigger load and beat the way through the flowering lowland heath, scattered with 30 centimetre high yabby mud-castles, to the coast.

Walking in the Tarkine and the Norfolk Range areas is challenging. There are hardly any tracks. It would be easy to be 'clagged in' on one of the area's many ridges—and then difficult to find a route off. It is an excursion only suitable

for experienced walkers; none the less, it is unforgettable.

The Tarkine is the largest unprotected wilderness in south-eastern Australia. It should have National Park and World Heritage status. Unfortunately, it is under threat from development and logging instead. My last trip there, to join the protest against the construction of the Heemskirk road, ended with 11 days in gaol. This time we shared six days of absolute freedom in one of the few places left on earth where the eagles are still the self-assured, unchallenged emperors. ●

The area of this walk can be seen in the south-west quadrant of the *Tasmania North West* 1:250 000 Tasmap.

Bob Brown, the Australian Greens' representative in the Senate, was a Tasmanian State MP from 1983–93. He is well known for his role as Director of the Wilderness Society during the Franklin River protests in the early 1980s (see *Wild* no 62). He was gaoled twice in 1995 for joining protests against the bulldozing of a road through the Tarkine wilderness.





We stood on a spur high above the Guy Fawkes River. A series of eucalyptus-covered ridges cascaded down to the valley floor below us. Helen searched for the river through the binoculars. A wedge-tailed eagle circling below picked up a thermal and quickly soared high overhead.

'It's a very long way down.' Helen's voice broke the silence.

The valley floor was over 600 metres below.

'Even further back.'

My pack already felt heavy and I envied the eagle's effortless soaring above the valley. I was not looking forward to climbing out.

Guy Fawkes River National Park is a wilderness park tucked away in north-eastern New South Wales. The first problem had been to get there. 'No vehicle access', the NRMA Sydney-Brisbane map categorically stated. This turned out to be incorrect. There is gravel-road access from the Grafton-Armidale road, at Durrumbidgee and Hernani and from the old Grafton-Glen Innes road at Dalmorton.

Guy Fawkes River is in character from the other New England parks. Poor soil, steep topography and the rainshadow of the Dorrigo plateau have led to the development of more open vegetation. Open eucalypt woodland dominates but in areas protected from drying winds are some of the State's best-developed stands of dry rainforest.

The steep-sided Guy Fawkes valley bisects the park. The river is believed to follow a geological fault line as the rocks to

the west are considerably older than those to the east.

Our plan was to descend to the river from the ridge south of Lucifers Thumb, spend a couple of days exploring upstream, and climb back out on Jordans Track.

We had camped overnight at the Chaerlundi Flats rest area, ready for an early start the next morning. But as usual we were dreadfully slow getting ready and by the time we set out it was 10 am. The start of the descent to the river is signposted from the escarpment walking track. From here a footworn and hoofworn track follows the ridge down to the river.

The ridge has some steep, loose sections. Towards the river it becomes broken and hard to follow and is crossed by many animal tracks. By the time I crunched across the gravel of the river bed my feet were very sore from the constant downhill thumping.

The river was obviously feeling the effects of the drought. Nevertheless, it was about five metres across at the waterhole and flowing gently.

I thumped my pack down on the gravel. 'Shhh', said Helen, pointing to the far bank. A young Pacific heron stood like a statue, searching the edge of the water for fish. We watched as it struck, snake-like, at the water, threw back its head and swallowed its prey. After the hot, dry ridge the river was a real oasis and we sat for a while listening to the murmur of the water and the rustle of the river oaks.

It was already 3 pm when we began to head south along the river. The river terraces were covered in long, dry and very scratchy grass but the many animal tracks along the edges of the terraces made walking easy.

I found a bright-green feral melon growing near the river. We saw more of these

Guy Fawkes morning. *Henry Gold*

DOWN TO THE RIVER

An encounter with the wildlife of the Guy Fawkes River in northern New South Wales, by *Thomas Cooper*

later. The seeds must have been spread by animals.

There were tracks everywhere. We were discussing what animals had made them as we climbed over the edge of a river terrace—and were confronted by a herd of brumbies about 50 metres away. They were beautiful horses, mainly chestnut-coloured, with a cream-coloured stallion. It was very disconcerting to have them canter inquisitively towards us. Cowards that we are, we ducked back below the level of the river terrace and followed a much rougher track through the river oaks.

The river was low enough to cross with a bit of rock hopping, and the easiest way to get across to the terraces was on the inside of the river meanders.

The grassy, flat river terraces provided plenty of potential camp-sites. We found a good spot on the west side of the river. We were starving and wolfed down a meal of pasta with vegetables in tomato sauce accompanied by steaming cups of Milo. Does it get any better than this? I asked myself.

I woke up about 5 am regretting the Milo which now dragged me from the warm sanctuary of the tent. It was freezing cold but in the still air the stars were magnificent. From the ridge behind us, a boobook proclaimed the last of the night as the eastern horizon slowly lightened.

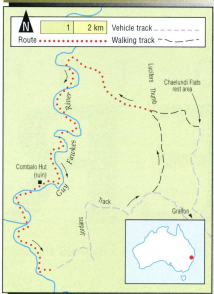
Soon after sunrise I poked my nose out of the tent again. The brumbies had crossed the river and were grazing on the hill behind us. When they saw me move they fixed me with a stare. The stallion would not take his eyes off us once until we left.

I went down to the river and my hands froze as I filled the water-bottles. I searched the water for fish but had less success than the heron the day before. Platypus, turtles and the rare eastern grey cod are all found in the river but the only sign of their presence was a turtle shell near our camp-site.

We made good time along the river and in a couple of hours had reached the clearing around the ruins of Combal Hut. The hut



Guy Fawkes River



was built about the turn of the century by Dave ('Pardy') Brown. He grazed sheep on the river plains and carted wool up McDonalds Ridge to Marengo Station.

Early in the century the valley was used extensively for moving stock. Three stock routes converge at Combal Hut. One heads north along the Guy Fawkes River, one heads out of the valley to the west and the third heads south before climbing McDonalds Ridge out of the valley. These routes are still gazetted and their continued use is causing problems with weeds and straying cattle in an area designated as wilderness.

We could not find the ruins of Combal Hut—they are probably hidden in the waist-high grass although I did not look too hard because I was worried about snakes. (Later

Hold on to your hat! Guy Fawkes River crossing. Right, a melon for ecstasy? Thomas Cooper

I was told that the hut is close to an old orange tree but I cannot remember seeing one in the clearing.)

We crossed the river to avoid the cliffs on the west side, crossed again on the next bend and walked upstream to the confluence with the Aberfoyle River.

Both rivers were running low and as we were very careless, we mistakenly followed the Aberfoyle upstream a short distance before we had a navigational panic and retraced our steps.

Some crossing points on the Aberfoyle had been deepened by cattle, something

which Helen discovered when she ended up in waist-deep water. While we sat on the river gravel drying out, a brilliant, black-and-red male flame robin came to inspect us. The much duller, brown female landed nearby. Quite the opposite of human couples, I thought, as Helen dried her bright-purple thermals!

It was late afternoon by the time we reached the Guy Fawkes River again to find some wallaroos feeding on the river flats. They were very wary of us and soon hopped away.

From here we crossed over to the east bank. The river was getting deeper and we were not sure whether we would be able to cross it

are on a narrow piece of ground between the river and a precipitous river bluff and are easily missed unless you stay close to the river.

Far from being abandoned, the stockyards looked very much in use, with new wire in the fences, a bag of potatoes and a full billy of water waiting. It is an unwritten rule of 'the long paddock' that you always leave a full billy at a camp, ready for the next visitors. After two days of wilderness it seemed strange to see human-made constructions.

There was plenty of flat land for pitching the tent but I was a bit worried lest our solitude would be ended by half a dozen stockmen and a few hundred cattle!

We ate as much as we could that night knowing we would have

-10°C. The morning was no better; it took a long time for the sun to rise over the river bluff. The water-bottles were frozen solid and we could not get the tops off. I had to warm up my icy camera batteries next to my skin to get some life out of them.

The cold was an incentive to get moving and we set what was a record for us—walking by 8.30 am.

Jordans Track starts from just behind and to the south of the stockyards. There are many misleading animal trails around but Jordans Track is clearly distinguished as an old four-wheel-drive track. (The Jordans Track marked on the *Chaelundi* 1:25 000 map is either incorrect or refers to an older route. The track from the stockyards follows the ridge to the north of Housewater Creek, meeting the 'Jordans Track' of the map at grid reference 327695.)

We had not walked with packs for almost a year and were feeling the strain. One peculiar thing about walking is that you always seem to forget between walks just how much extra effort every kilogram you carry entails. On every walk I swear to myself that I will travel lighter on the next trip. But come next time, I load up with the same old stuff again. I love photography and as usual was carrying my full Nikon gear including five lenses, flash-gun, extension tubes and tripod. I cursed every kilo that day.

Jordans Track is a real test for your cardiovascular system. Fortunately there are some good views of the valley to the west and north—an excuse for plenty of rests. Some sections are so steep that it is difficult to keep your footing. There is no water on the ridge and we were glad of the icy water in our water-bottles.

It took us about four hours to reach the top. We collapsed, drank what was left of the water, ate what was left of the scroggin and made ourselves thoroughly sick as a result!

We then followed the beautifully flat escarpment track back to the rest area. From the lookouts on the escarpment the river valley was spread out before us and we could follow by eye most of the route we had taken.

The walk is about 30 kilometres and could easily be done in two days, with a campsite around Combalo Hut. Taking three days makes for a more relaxed trip with time for bird-watching and exploring around the river.

The Guy Fawkes River National Park seems to have plenty of other bushwalking opportunities and we shall be back. ●

This walk is covered by the *Chaelundi* 1:25 000 Central Mapping Authority sheet.

Thomas Cooper is a computer programmer who started bushwalking on the Yorkshire Moors when he was a boy. He emigrated to Brisbane in 1989 and spends as much time as possible exploring the wilder parts of Australia with his long-suffering girlfriend Helen.



again. The east bank rapidly became steeper and we were forced to climb high above the river. Going uphill we both really felt our packs.

We were looking for the disused stockyards at the foot of Jordans Track. The yards

to carry anything that was left up over 600 metres back to the Chaelundi Flats. A brush-tailed possum came around to see what was happening. We did not feed it and it reluctantly settled for stealing a potato from the sack.

The night was unbelievably cold. I estimate that the temperature was about

The Outback

...and a glimpse nearer to home, by *Stuart Grant*

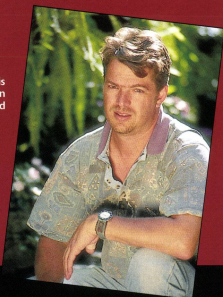


Chambers Pillar,
Northern Territory,
at dawn. Right, the
magic of the Olgas, NT.





Stuart Grant has always loved the outdoors. After ten years of the nine-to-five grind he decided to follow his heart and work as a bush tour guide, which also gave him the opportunity to indulge his eye for photography. He now combines his passion for both—shooting images for his photo library and running photographic safaris. His work last appeared in the Folio in *Wild* no 51.



Left, waterfall detail, the Otways, Victoria.
Below, star trails around fire-lit tree,
Mt Gould, Western Australia.



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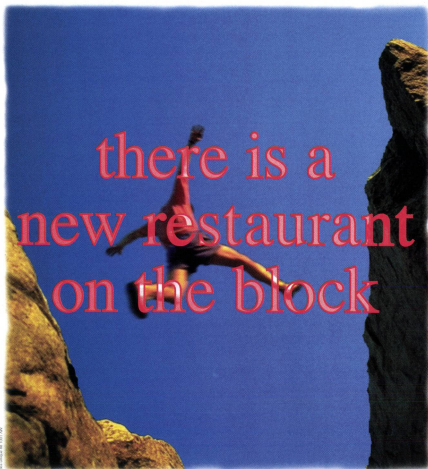
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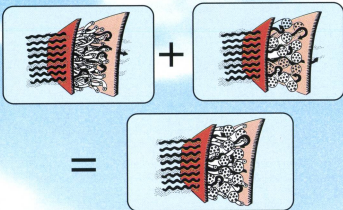
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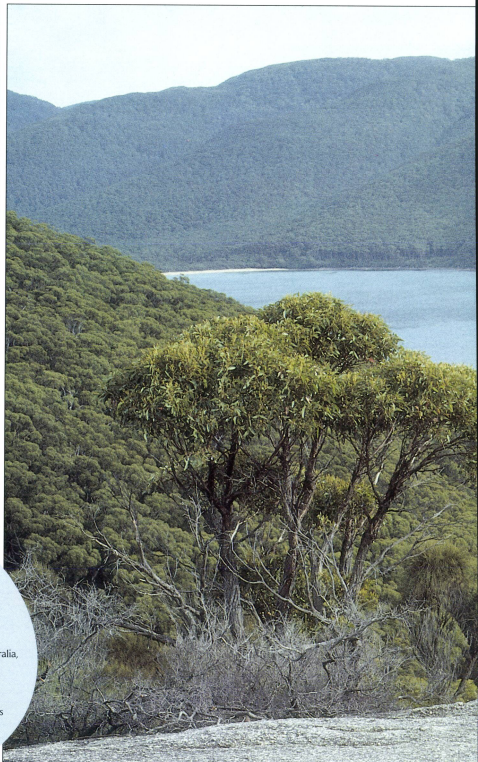
Wilson's Promontory

The classic coastal circuit walk, by Troy McDonald

Continually besieged by the restless waters of Bass Strait, 'the Prom' is famous for its granite boulders, blue sea and mountains cloaked in green. Situated on the 39th parallel, the Prom's closest major land mass to the east is South America, and it shares with the southern tip of that continent the sometimes wild weather conditions for which these latitudes are renowned. These changeable conditions—while challenging to bushwalkers—add character to an area already rich in natural beauty. Some compensation for the unpredictable climate, however, is the network of excellent and well-maintained walking tracks which provide plenty of opportunities for even the least experienced to enjoy the park's attractions that have been so appreciated by their predecessors.

First gazetted as parkland in 1898 the Prom has become one of Victoria's, if not Australia's, favourite National Parks. This popularity was evident in December last year when more than 3200 public submissions were made in response to a State Government plan to 'develop' the area—a plan which included proposals for a 150-bed hotel overlooking Norman Bay, a 45-bed walkers' lodge, commercial development of the historic lighthouse and four new huts at Oberon Bay, Martins Hill,

The entrance to Sealers Cove from the track to Refuge Cove. Both photos Chris Baxter



the walk

at a glance

GRADE Easy

LENGTH Two or three days

TYPE Coastal scenery

REGION Southernmost tip of mainland Australia, south-east Victoria

BEST TIME Any time of year—autumn has the most stable weather

SPECIAL POINTS Camping permits required—bookings recommended.
Entry fee applies.
Fuel-stove-only area

Home Cove and Horn Point to serve a commercial walking operation. (The government withdrew its plans for the four-star hotel in mid-January.)

Once you have visited the area you will understand why those who enjoy the Prom have been so vocal in its defence. The craggy peaks, fantastic beaches and cool fern gullies of the southernmost tip of mainland Australia offer spectacular scenery. The Eastern Coves walk described here gives access to a number of these magnificent areas.

● When to go

Wilsons Promontory is a park for all seasons. Summer is a very popular time to

visit; the days can be hot and dry and although such conditions are not ideal for extended walking, the joy of swimming at this time of year is a reward. Autumn brings mild, sunny days and generally stable weather and is a great time for walking. The storms and gales of the Southern Ocean often find their way to the shores of the Prom in winter and therefore walking can be wet and a little more difficult during this time, but the scenery is striking. During spring, wild-flower displays become an attraction in their own right.

● Safety

Although the track is well graded and navigation should not present any problems

a good map and a compass should be carried. Water is generally available all year round at Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay and Oberon Bay; check with the ranger at Tidal River before departure. Fires are not permitted and fuel stoves should be carried instead.

● Maps

The *Wilsons Promontory National Park* 1:50 000 Vicmap (Outdoor Leisure Series) is an excellent map which clearly shows all popular walking routes and camping facilities.

● Further information

Permits and camping information can be obtained from the information centre at



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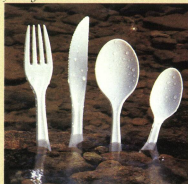
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Tidal River (open 8.30 am to 5.00 pm daily). Phone (03) 5680 9555, fax (03) 5680 9516 or write to: Ranger in Charge, Wilsons Promontory National Park, Tidal River via Foster, Vic 3960.

● Permits

Permits are required for all camping within the National Park. Numbers are restricted and permits are best obtained at least three weeks in advance. Group sizes on the Eastern Coves Circuit are limited to twelve. Permits should be dropped in the 'Returned Hike Permits' box at Tidal River after your walk.

● Access

The park is three hours' drive south-east of Melbourne by way of the South Gippsland Highway. Turn right at Meeniyan to reach the Prom through Fish Creek and Yanakie. An entrance fee of \$6.50 is charged.

● The walk

The Eastern Coves Circuit follows graded tracks and is neither long nor difficult. Overnight stays must be in the designated camping areas at Sealers Cove, Refuge Cove, Waterloo Bay and Oberon Bay. The circuit can be walked in two or three days, with the slower option allowing a more thorough exploration of the area's magnificent bays and beaches. The walk is described in a clockwise direction from Tidal River and includes a visit to Oberon Bay on the final day. If you decide not to include Oberon Bay in your itinerary, you would do better to start the walk from the Mt Oberon car park. There is ample overnight parking for walkers' vehicles at both Tidal River and Mt Oberon.

● Day one

Tidal River to Sealers Cove (13.5 kilometres). From Tidal River follow the access road to the Mt Oberon turn-off and continue to walk uphill to the Mt Oberon car park at Telegraph Saddle. (If you are really lucky you may be able to hitch a ride over this less interesting section of the walk.) From the car park the bushwalking proper begins by following a sign to Windy Saddle. The track is shaded by tall eucalypts and skirts the northern side of the Mt Wilson Range before climbing to a clearing at Windy Saddle, some three kilometres from the car park. There are excellent views from here of the east- and west coasts and the saddle is frequented by the beautiful superb blue wren which you are sure to see darting from the vegetation if you drop your packs and stop for a quick snack.

Leaving Windy Saddle the track becomes narrower as it negotiates the southern slopes of Mt Ramsey and passes glorious fern glades, stands of southern sassafras and even a small waterfall. Further on the track leaves the rocky spurs to emerge at Sealers Swamp. This beautiful section of track is lined with duckboards to protect the fragile environment that includes

swamp paper-bark, soft tree ferns, ground mosses and lilly-pilly.

After crossing Sealers Creek by footbridge you will emerge at the magnificent, glassy bay that is Sealers Cove. Surrounded by rocky peaks and with Sealers Creek entering at its southern end, the cove is often shrouded in mist. Cross the creek to find the camping area on the bay's southern shore. (Those completing the Eastern Coves Circuit in two days prefer to spend their first night at Refuge Cove, six kilometres further along the track.) The short walk on the first day should give you ample time to return to the creek and explore the cove after setting up camp and filling your water-bottles from the stream on the eastern side of the camp-site. During our visit we were fortunate to have the cove to ourselves to enjoy the last of the afternoon light before it disappeared behind the Wilson Range.

● Day two

Sealers Cove to Little Waterloo Bay (14.5 kilometres). From the camp-site follow the new coastal track which skirts the southern headland of Sealers Cove to Horn Point. On the early stages of this walk there are fine views of Sealers Cove and Five Mile Beach to the north but the best views are a little further down the track at Horn Point. Here, the open rock slabs provide splendid coastal views from Johnny Souey Cove in the north to Rodondo Island in the south.

Leaving Horn Point the track passes through lush fern glades before dropping down to the beach of North Refuge Cove. As you will discover, this is the first of two magnificent coves that share a common opening to the ocean no more than 200 metres wide. The narrow entrance ensures that the waters are protected from the incessant swells that enter Bass Strait from



To leave Refuge Cove for Waterloo Bay you first have to run the gauntlet of Cove Creek. Sue Baxter didn't seem to mind.

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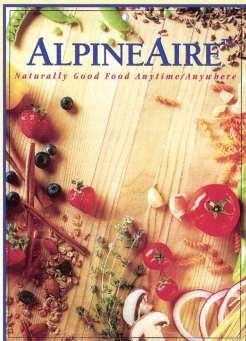
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WIL 194

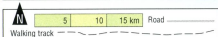


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the Southern Ocean. It is almost impossible to resist dropping your packs and shedding your boots to paddle in the turquoise waters which lap a shore line strewn with granite boulders. Continue to the southern end of Refuge Cove and you will find a camp-site adjacent to Cove Creek, where fresh water is available all year round. It is possible to spend your first night here as an alternative to Sealers Cove.)

From South Refuge Cove the track climbs steadily to an open rock slab with panoramic views of the cove before climbing towards Kersops Peak. A short diversion can be taken to the summit of the peak and on a clear day it is well worth while. You should easily see the Prom Lighthouse, Waterloo Bay and Rodondo Island to the south. Once you have returned to the main track the descent along the southern side of the peak provides cooler walking conditions beneath dense foliage. The track crosses a small stream crowded with tree ferns before opening on to another sparkling, white beach. From here the track to Little Waterloo Bay hugs the coastline just above lichen-covered boulders and passes huge, granite tors and areas of purple, flowering, coastal pigface. We found this to be the roughest part of the circuit but the scenery was a just reward. Continuing on the track you will eventually cross another small creek to find the camp-site of Little Waterloo Bay on its southern shore. The creek has a continuous supply of fresh drinking water.

Little Waterloo Bay is stunning—a dazzling, white, sandy beach surrounded by the slopes of Mt Wilson to the west and granite outcrops to the north and south. After setting up camp we took the opportunity to have a swim in the cool waters at the northern end of the bay where granite boulders give protection from the cool, easterly breeze without blocking the warmth of the western sun.

● Day three

Little Waterloo Bay to Tidal River by way of Oberon Bay (16 kilometres). From the camp-site follow the short track to the south end of Waterloo Bay. Here, the tannin-stained waters of Freshwater Creek enter the bay by way of a boulder-strewn stream. Rock hop across the narrow stream and continue walking south along the beach for 300 metres to a signposted track that leads up and over the dunes to an open area of heath. This wind-pruned heath is often clothed in wild flowers in the spring. During our visit the brilliant, yellow flowers of the stunted cushion-bush provided splashes of colour where the track leads down to the

swamps of Freshwater Creek. Once again the track is duckboarded in this area to protect the fragile flora.

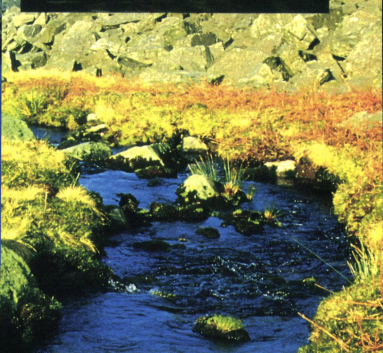
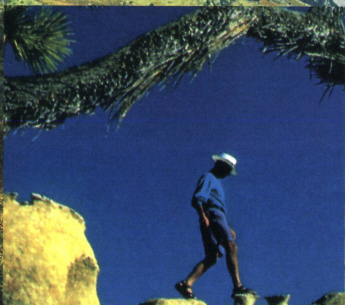
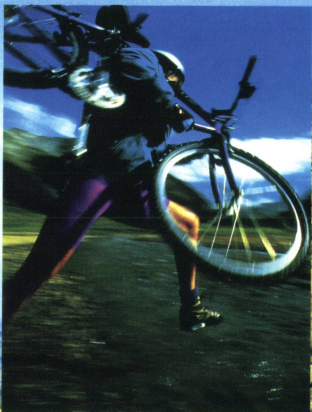
From the swampy stands of paper-barks the track climbs to a saddle between Mt Boulder on the left and Mt Wilson on the right. As its name suggests, Mt Boulder is strewn with huge, granite tors that have been weathered into bizarre shapes. Descending to more duckboarded sections of swamp, the track continues beneath a dense canopy of tea-tree before finally meeting with the Lighthouse Track. Turn north for a short distance before heading west again towards Oberon Bay. If you have elected not to visit Oberon Bay, avoid this turn and continue along the Lighthouse Track to the Mt Oberon car park.

The track to Oberon Bay is actually an old, sandy access road that leads to the camp-site near the mouth of Fraser Creek. Once at the camp-site, signs will direct you to a brackish section of the creek where water is available. After filling your water-bottles follow the beach north to reach Growler Creek at the northern end of the bay. Cross the creek on lichen-covered boulders before climbing the northern bank and heading for Little Oberon Bay.

Nestled at the base of Mt Oberon, Little Oberon Bay is sheltered by Norman Point, which is reached after a short diversion off the main track. The point's bare ridge has fine views of the Anser and Glennie island groups off the west coast of the Prom. From here the track follows a gentle slope down through tea-tree scrub before emerging at the southern end of Norman Bay. Now the two kilometre stretch of sand to Tidal River is all that remains of the 44 kilometre circuit. Following clumps of leather kelp and 'bubble weed' walk the final two kilometres before turning towards a walkway that clearly leads to the Tidal River camp-site. If you look back from the top of the dune you will see the foamy breakers engulfing your line of wayward footprints—a fitting end to a fantastic, three-day walk. 🐾

Troy McDonald is a freelance photographer/writer based in Brisbane. His articles have appeared in a number of publications. He has bushwalked extensively throughout Queensland, the Northern Territory and Victoria. Wilsons Promontory is one of his favourite places.

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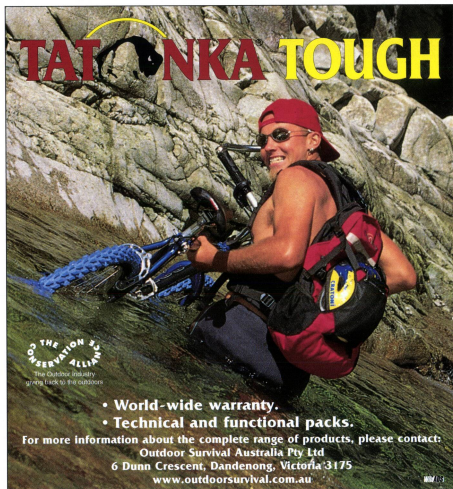
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Ski-touring and XCD boots

Booting up for going down, by **Michael Hampton**

For years ski tourers and cross-country downhill (XCD) skiers have relied on leather boots or on boots made from a mixture of leather and synthetic. Plastic cuffs began to appear on XCD boots during the late 1980s but fully plastic boots still seemed to be a distant dream. The problem lay in building a plastic boot that would flex to allow a walking/striding motion and accom-

modate the unique, free-heel stance of the Telemark turn during which pressure is applied to the rear ski through the ball of the raised back foot. As the touring/XCD boot market is relatively small there wasn't the money to invest in new technology. Since that time, however, Scarpa got the ball rolling on plastic boots, and other manufacturers have followed suit.

Touring/XCD boots should flex like walking boots but they also need to be torsionally stiff for edging and for steering control. The sole material is the part that comes in contact with the ski, snow or ground. Rubber is commonly used, usually in the form of Vibram-type compounds. The less visible mid-sole has considerable influence on boot stiffness, especially with traditional, Norwegian-welted leather boots, in which the uppers are stitched to the mid-sole and the sole.

If the upper material is plastic the boot will be as stiff as the plastic from which it is made and will stay that way for a long time. ('Pebax' is a type of cold-resistant, super-durable plastic.) 'Beefier' boots use either a stiffer plastic or thicker, full-grain leather. Leather boots perform extremely well but soften with prolonged use although re-soling can restore leather boots to their former glory. Proofed-leather boots repel moisture in dry, cold conditions. However, wet and abrasive corn snow can make even the most meticulously maintained leather boots waterlogged after a day or so of use. Alpine climbers and mountaineers used to be familiar

These boots were made for, er, flying. (Peter Campbell airborne over Mt Timbertop, from Mt Buller, Victoria.) *Michael Hampton*

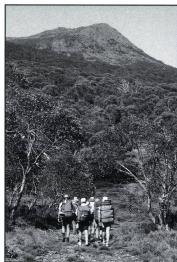
This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of, among other things, his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality. The survey was checked and verified by *Glenn Tempest*, and reviewed by at least three of *Wild's* editorial staff. It is based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of this issue's production; however, ranges and specifications may have changed in the weeks since then. Some aspects of this survey, such as the assessment of suitability for certain activities—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgment on the part of the author, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration. Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.



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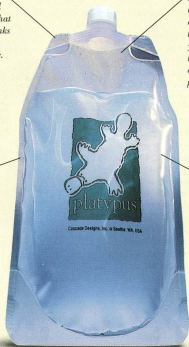
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with this soggy scenario but for them the problem was solved 10–15 years ago with the introduction of plastic-shelled mountaineering boots.

On both leather or plastic models, the **plastic cuffs** may be built into the boot or the cuff may be external and hinged. Hinged cuffs may allow more fore/aft flex when walking. Some hinged-cuff models have a locking mechanism at

the rear. Skiers without boots featuring hinged cuffs usually loosen the top closures when walking or skiing on flat terrain. Beefed-up XCD boots will have more **height** than touring boots and may have a forward 'cant' or tilt. Boots with higher cuffs rely more on buckle-and-strap **closure systems** than laces. In fact, you'll only find laces on lower-cut touring boots or on the inners for plastic boots. A power strap is a

Velcro closure which secures the foot in place.

Plastic boots have an **inner boot** and this is one reason why they have superior water resistance. Sweat is absorbed by the use of 'wickly' materials such as Cambrelle in double- and single boots although inner boots are easy to take out and dry.

The **binding system** attaches the boot to the ski. Not much has changed here:

Wild Gear Survey

Ski-touring and XCD boots

	Sole, mid-sole material	Upper material, joint with sole	Plastic cuff	Height, millimetres	Closure system	Binding system	Weight, grams	Available sizes	Suitability for		Comments	Approx price, \$
									General touring	Heavy touring/XCD		
Alico Italy												
Mountain Ski	Vibram	Leather, NW-style	N	175	Lace	75 mm	950	36-50	★★★★	★★	Double-tongue closure. Classic touring boot	325
Blaze	Vibram	3.2 mm leather, NW-style	N	220	Lace, two buckles	75 mm	1400	36-50	★★	★★★★	11° forward cant	405
Alpina Slovenia												
BC 1000	Rubber, torsion mid-sole	PU-protected leather, NBC-style	N	190	Lace	NBC	710	36-49	★★★★	●	Thinsulate lining. Lighter touring boot	195
BC 1200	As above	Leather/Kevlar-protected toe and sides, NBC-style	N	190	Lace	NBC	800	36-49	★★★★	●	Full-leather version of BC 1000. Replaces BC 1500—slightly different cuff	240
BC 2000	Pebax, torsion mid-sole	PU-protected leather, NBC-style	Hinged	227	Lace, buckle	NBC	960	37-47	★★★	★★	Now has double rivets to reinforce toe	285
Andrew/Arkos Italy												
Comice	Vibram, Hytrel wedge mid-sole	3 mm full-grain leather, NW-style	N	175	Lace	75 mm	900	36-50	★★★★	★★	Classic touring boot	280
Greenland	As above	As above	N	205	Lace, two buckles	75 mm	1200	36-50	★★★	★★★★	Neprene used for cushioning and firm fit around ankle	390
TM Norway/Solitude	As above	As above	Some integrated stiffening	220	As above	75 mm	1220	36-50	★★	★★★★	All-round XCD boot	400
Artex Italy												
BCX 47	Rubber	Leather, NBC-style	Hinged	170	Power strap, lace	NBC	875	36-47	★★★★	●	This touring boot is suited to lighter skis	250
Garment Italy												
BC Finste	Rubber	2-4 mm leather, NBC-style	N	180	Lace	NBC	800	36-46	★★★★	●	Classic-style touring boot	270
Estremo*	Vibram, PU/nylon mid-sole	Pebax	Part of shell, not hinged	310	Power strap, two buckles	75 mm	1300	39-46	●	★★★★	Improved model for 1997. Additional wedge can be inserted behind calf to increase cant for downhill skiing. Waterproof liner	500
Merrell Korea/Italy												
Traverse	Rubber	Leather, NBC-style	N	230	Lace	NBC	925	38-47	★★★★	●	PU foot-frame. Thinsulate lining. Women's sizes 36-43. Made in Korea	220
Descente	Rubber	As above	N	230	Power strap, lace, buckle	NBC	1000	38-47	★★★★	★★	As above	265
FTS Flash	Vibram	Leather, NW-style	Side stiffening	210	Lace, buckle	75 mm	1300	38-46	★★	★★★★	Pebax foot-frame. Made in Italy	535
Scarpa Italy												
Mountain	Vibram	One-piece leather, NW-style	N	200	Lace	75 mm	1000	38-47	★★★★	★★	Traditional touring/XCD boot. Half sizes available	260
Wasatch	Vibram	One-piece leather, NW-style	Some integrated stiffening	200	Lace	75 mm	1200	38-47	★★★★	★★★	Classic, one-piece leather, touring/XCD boot	380
T3*	Vibram	Plastic	Hinged, with lock at rear	270	Two buckles (laced inner)	75 mm	1325	39-47	★★★★	★★★★	Lightest and softest 75 mm, plastic, touring/XCD boot. Women's sizes 39-41	490
T2*	Vibram	Plastic	As above	280	As above	75 mm	1700	38-47	●	★★★★	Heavy end of touring/XCD boot spectrum. Hinge can be locked in two positions	630
● low ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent * With inner boot PU polyurethane N no na not applicable NBC Nordic back country NBC-style Joint between upper and sole is stitched and glued NW-style Joint between upper and sole is Norwegian welt The country listed after the manufacturer's name is the country in which the products are made												

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The **weight** listed in the table is for one medium-sized boot unless stated otherwise. **Sizes available** are European metric sizes.

General touring refers to day- and over-night trips with or without a pack on undulating terrain with some XCD skiing, often in combination with the use of lighter touring skis, sometimes without metal edges. The NBC binding system is well represented at the lower

Some of the boots in this survey may be a little hard to track down. The availability of even the most popular brands seems to vary widely from season to season and many are exclusively stocked by just one or two shops. However, if you try a range of out-

the onslaught of a ferocious blizzard.

Sole thickness at the toe

If you already own skis check that the boots you intend to buy aren't too thick to fit your current bindings. It can happen!

Fit

Ensure that the boots fit snugly in the heel area. Walk around in them—including up and down stairs—to simulate striding over snow plains. Movement at the heel is the major cause of blisters. One of the advantages of plastic double boots is that they can be customised to improve fit. Different insoles and foot-beds can be tried and extra padding can be secured to the outside of the inner (around the ankle) to improve the snugness of fit. Whenever possible, try the boots out first and remember that different brands suit differently shaped feet. It definitely pays to shop around.

Waterproofness

Leather boots need to be treated regularly with substances such as Sno-seal or Biwell. Check boots to assess the ability of the tongue-closure system to keep water out. Don't store your plastic boots in full sunlight—it will degrade the plastic.

Boots for women

Touring and XCD mightn't be quite as 'blokey' as, say, a football team but there does seem to be a lack of boots sized for women. Over the years I've known quite a few women who have had difficulty obtaining small ski boots in a women's last. There are limited stocks of an Andrew/Arkos women's boot called the Smilla (not listed in table); Merrell and Scarpa also have women's sizing.

Instruction

The latest, super-duper, hard-core Telemark gear isn't going to turn you into 'Sven the Shredder' or 'Bitchin' Betty the Back-country Bowl Destroyer'. Get in as much skiing as you can—and some more on top of that. Don't be like many back-country skiers who, alas, only front up for instruction after they've built an idiosyncratic style of which only a mother would be proud! Take lessons regularly and assess your own abilities and technique but above all—have fun!

end of this category.

There are still a couple of classic leather boots that straddle this and the next category and these are the boots with which old timers will be familiar.

Heavy back-country touring/XCD refers to demanding, multiday, overnight skiing with a rucksack, incorporating a regular fare of bowl-and-gully skiing. This also includes base-camp XCD skiing where the focus is on cranking turns rather than on covering kilometres. These boots are also more suitable for lift-serviced skiing and racing.

POINTS TO WATCH

Match the boot to the binding and ski

Fat skis need 'fat' boots, and so on. Don't let your bindings be the weak link—choose accordingly.

Shim bindings for plastic boots

Plastic boots have a rocker built into the sole. This means that when it is weighted there is more upward force placed on the binding or, more importantly, on the screws that secure your binding to the ski. The solution is to shim the binding so that it is raised about 50 millimetres off the ski. If you are buying plastic boots, or a package, ask your salesperson or technician about modifying your bindings (if they haven't already mentioned it).


Release bindings

Don't let your knees bear the brunt of your skiing 'offs'. Consider fitting release bindings, especially if you're purchasing high-cut boots. A couple of good brands are available and they're cheaper than a knee reconstruction.

Safety straps

Always use safety straps, both at resorts and in the back country. If your ski comes off and spears someone under the chair-lift, well, you're in big trouble.

You're also in trouble if a ski takes off down Lady Northcotes Canyon near the end of the day just as you hasten away before

doors retailers and those shops near the ski fields which specialise in Nordic ski equipment, you should be able to find whichever boot takes your fancy. 

Michael Hampton (see Contributors in *Wild* no 17) is a former director of Australia's largest Nordic ski school at Lake Mountain in Victoria's High Country and has worked for many years in the outdoors retail industry. He has skied—and instructed—extensively in the Australian Alps and overseas.

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Fire-Jet

Versatile, safe and compact.

Fuel:

Multifuel capacity without changing parts: Shellite, petrol and kerosene.

Safety:

Fuel pump is fitted with unique safety-valve to reduce pressure build-up.

Performance:

High output, low noise and extremely stable.

Tested:

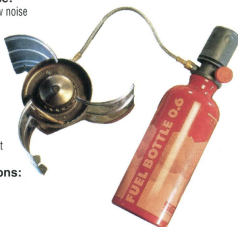
Every stove is 100% burn-tested.

Compact:

Wind-break (supports) folds flat against stove.

Specifications:

Weight, 255 gr; height, 8.5 cm; diameter, 8 cm.



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Reliable and easy to use.

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Contents:

Two-section wind-shield, two Innox pots, one Innox frying-pan, brass burner with simmer-ring and clamp handle.

Innox:

A unique combination of stainless steel and aluminium is used in the pots and frying-pan. Stainless steel is used on the inside because it is hygienic, does not affect the taste and is easy to clean. Aluminium is used on the outside for fast heat transfer and because it is light.

Specifications:

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WIL 1/9

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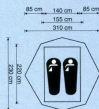
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WIL 1/9

SIERRA LEONE



\$499



The Sierra Leone is the most popular model in the Salewa range. The fly sheet extends down to earth & can be pitched first in wet weather or by itself to provide a lightweight (2 kg) single-skin shelter for up to 4 people. Two vestibules allow for excellent cross ventilation, storage space & cooking area.
Weight: 3.2 kg

Light & Strong by



- Flame retardant waterproof coatings
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- Tent poles, 11 millimetres duralium 7001 T6 alloy

All Salewa tents feature polyester fly-sheets with a high UV resistance (two-three times that of nylon), which means your tent will last longer, with the added bonus of only half the stretch of nylon giving better pitch & stability. The inner, have a genuine 'bath-tub', floor construction, lantern loops & handy storage pockets. Inner tent entrances have additional mosquito net doors to ensure maximum 'flow-thru' ventilation and provide a welcome sanctuary from annoying insects.



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The Outdoor Experience
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Fyshwick (06) 280 6033
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Jolly Swagman's Camping World

Hobart (03) 6234 3999

Western Australia

Wilderness Equipment

Claremont (09) 385 3711



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MAGNUM SPACE

A larger 3 person version with all the proven characteristics of the Leone tent. The Magnum offers spacious comfort and unequalled wind stability.
Weight: 4.3 kg.



\$349

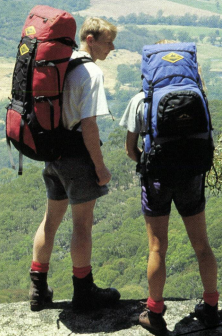
MICRA

A lightweight 2 person tent, the Micra is ideal where weight is a primary consideration. The Micra has a large entrance and roomy vestibule to protect equipment from the elements.
Weight: 2.3 kg. Fly: Polyester. 2,500 mm proofing.
Floor: Nylon. 3,000 mm Proofing.
Poles: 9 mm 7001 T6

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ADVANTAGE RUCKSACK HARNESS

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HARNESS
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- KATOOMBA 190 KATOOMBA ST.
- FORTITUDE VALLEY 148 WICKHAM ST.
AND 224 BARRY PDE.
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camera pouches

Sleeping-bags for cameras—a *Wild* survey



The secret of taking great photographs is not just having an eye for composition and lighting; you also have to be in the right place at the right time...and with your camera. The need to keep the dirt, dust and moisture out of your sensitive and expensive piece of electro-optic wizardry is not always compatible with the desire to have it easily accessible when that picture opportunity jumps out at you.

This survey includes camera pouches suitable for use when bushwalking. The models have been selected according to the following criteria: they should allow a camera to be carried so that it is easily accessible (without having to dive into your pack) and provide reasonable protection from shock, moisture and dust while bushwalking. You should be able to carry the pouch while wearing a rucksack—either on the rucksack's hip-belt or mounted on the chest harness. The

The camera pouch is on our cool, intrepid leader's other hip.
Dan Colborne

This survey summarises the findings of the writer, who was selected for the task because of, among other things, his knowledge of the subject and his impartiality. The survey was checked and verified by *Brendon Eishold* and reviewed by at least three of *Wild's* editorial staff. It is based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of this issue's production; ranges and specifications may have changed in the weeks since then.

Some aspects of this survey, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgment on the part of the author, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

'Value' is based primarily upon features and quality, relative to price. A cheaper product may be judged more highly by someone whose main concern is price.

An important criterion for inclusion in this *Wild* survey is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops or camera shops in the central business districts of major Australian capital- and other cities.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

— patagonia® —

CAPILENE®

UNDERWEAR

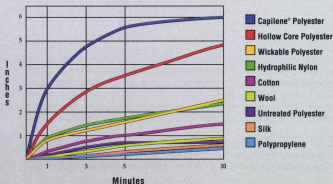
World's Best Sports Underwear

When people exercise, they sweat. Correct management of heat loss and perspiration help prevent hypothermia in cold conditions; moisture management is just as important in hot and humid conditions when heatstroke may occur if evaporative heat loss is inhibited.

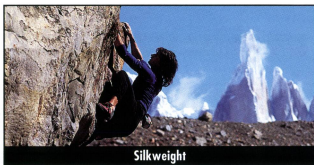
The solution is to layer with clothing designed specifically to move moisture away from the skin. Capilene Underwear is exceptionally effective at keeping the skin dry, and the body comfortable by wicking perspiration to the outside of the fabric where it evaporates into the air or is transferred to the next layer of clothing.

The Capilene treatment is bonded to the surface of each fibre and will not wash out. We've added an anti-microbial finish to all weights of Capilene Underwear (except Stretch) to inhibit the growth of odour-causing bacteria. Capilene Underwear is easy to clean, can be tossed into the washer and dryer, and requires no special care. It stays soft and supple, and it won't shrink.

WICKING COMPARISONS

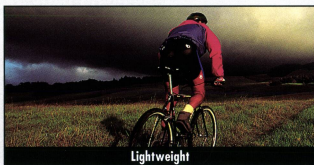


Capilene Polyester wicks moisture off the skin faster than any other popular underwear fabric. It starts out wicking faster and maintains its speed. Faster wicking decreases drying time thus ensuring your comfort.



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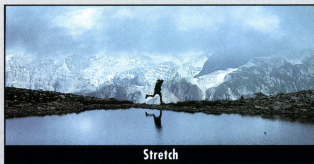
Lightweight

AEROBIC LAYER



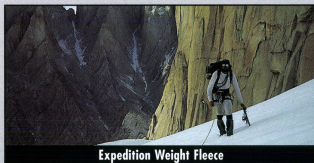
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Capilene Underwear is available at Australia's finest outdoors shops.

Photos: Tap to Bounce, Beth Wall, John Kelly, Greg Van Dierksen, Cliff Light, Jordan Smith © Patagonia, Inc. 1997

only exception is the LowePro Off Trail, which is a bum-bag-style pouch that can be worn with a day pack and with some larger packs.

Two basic sizes of camera pouches have been selected for inclusion in this survey: the larger size should be suitable for medium-size, 35 millimetre, single lens reflex cameras (SLRs) with a standard 35–80 millimetre zoom lens; the smaller, for medium-size compact cameras.

The dimensions we have given in the table are our measurements of the *internal* dimensions of the pouch—most manufacturers specify *external* dimensions in their product literature which may give a false impression of their product's capacity. It is a good idea to take your camera along when you are shopping for a pouch—if the fit is too tight you may be unable to close it properly. If too loose, your camera may not be as well protected against shock and vibration.

The models listed in the table are a selection of a wider range of products. There are a number of other products on the market that may be suitable for use under some conditions; the manufacturers featured in the table also produce other models—shop around to find the one that best suits you. We found that most products were manufactured to a very high standard and with similar, high-quality materials. The majority have much the same degree of padding and use a similar grade of closed-cell foam to provide protection against both impact and heat from direct sunlight. The Ortlieb Aquazoom has slightly thicker foam than the others but does not have a nylon liner. Camera Care Sys-

tems pouches are made with foam which makes them feel thicker and softer than other products.

With the exception of the Ortlieb Aquazoom most models are only showerproof. Even if the material of a pouch is claimed to be waterproof, zips and seams may allow moisture to get in. For extended walking in the wet additional protection in the form of a waterproof liner (such as a plastic bag) or a completely waterproof product is needed. Well-designed lids and closures are important—look for an overlapping lid with an internal sleeve to keep out wind-blown moisture and dust. Velcro closures can ice up in cold conditions causing them to seal poorly—beware.

Camera Care Systems products are extremely well padded and have a waterproof outer shell and inner liner. Their lids incorporate a 'mouth-lock' system (an additional nylon sleeve) that reduces the incidence of moisture seeping beneath the lid. Ortlieb's Aquazoom has a totally waterproof roll-and-buckle closure but no liner (although the padding is bonded to the outer shell). Eagle Creek products have either a zip or a Fastex buckle closure without an additional moisture barrier. (The survey referee considered them to be the least robust of the models listed.) The Eagle Creek Padded Travel Pouch is as well padded as other products but the top mounted zip entry could let moisture get in.

LowePro pouches are claimed to be 'water resistant'; the Cordura-type material

points to watch

- Choose a camera pouch that fits your camera snugly but not too tightly.
- Make sure that the closure is effective and protects against wind-blown rain, sand or snow.
- Make sure that you can carry the pouch in a comfortable position (for example, on a waist-belt closer to the hip than to the front of your thigh).
- Miniature accessory karabiners are a convenient, lightweight and secure way of attaching larger pouches in a variety of positions.
- Try not to use your camera's carrying strap while it is in the pouch—it will reduce the effectiveness of the closure.
- Carry spare plastic bags and silica-gel (moisture absorbent) sachets for wet conditions.
- Use a skylight (1A) filter to protect your lens: scratched filters are cheap to replace—lenses are not!

from which they are made is coated with polyurethane which would make them as water resistant as the other products. The lids of the LowePro Topload Zoom and Off Trail are good examples of those with a suitable overlap.

The guarantee which accompanies a product can give some indication of its quality: LowePro offers a lifetime, 'original owner' guarantee on workmanship and materials. Camera Care Systems products come with a 30-year guarantee.

Your judgment on value for money will probably be largely based on price; here the emphasis is on how well each product is likely to perform, given its price. The overall levels of protection provided by the products listed and their quality of construction were generally similar. We have given a high value-for-money rating to the Ortlieb Aquazoom because although it is almost twice the price of similar-sized products in our opinion it is the only one likely to guarantee protection against moisture on an extended trip in wet conditions. Indeed, it would also be suitable for use in 'wet' sports such as canyoning and kayaking.

Guy Reeve

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

● Puff up for winter

Four new items of clothing are available from US manufacturer *Patagonia*. Designed for walking, climbing and skiing in conditions of heavy snow and ice, the *Torre Jacket* (which weighs about 800 grams) and *Torre Pants* (about 700 grams) appear to offer excellent protection and comfort. Both items are made of three-ply Gore-Tex combined with a tightly woven 'mini Ripstop' (nylon) outer which improves resistance to abrasion. Patches of this material which are of heavier weight reinforce the shoulders—arms—hood and back—side—knees—lower leg, respectively. The

Wild Equipment Survey

Camera pouches

	Type of camera for which suitable	Dimensions internal height x width, millimetres	Maximum belt loop width, millimetres	Shell material	Quality of construction	Padding/protection	Value for money	Approx price, £
Camera Care Systems UK								
Compact 1 (Large)	Compact	130 x 85 x 85	60	600 denier polyurethane-coated nylon	★★★★	★★★★	★★	45
Warthog (Standard)	SLR	160 x 90 x 195	50	As above	★★★★	★★★★	★★	90
Snowflake*	SLR	160 x 90 x 195	50	As above	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	90
Eagle Creek USA								
Compact Camera Pouch	Compact	150 x 50 x 100	80	500 denier polyurethane-coated Cordura	★★★	★★	★★½	30
Padded Travel Pouch	SLR	230 x 50 x 140	80	As above	★★★	★★	★★½	50
LowePro USA								
AF-1 Compact Camera Pouch**	Compact	150 x 50 x 80	85	600 denier polyurethane-coated nylon	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	20
Topload Zoom 1	SLR	170 x 100 x 140	60	As above	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	45
Off Trail	SLR	175 x 110 x 130***	†	As above	★★★★	★★★★	★★	70
Ortlieb Germany								
Aquazoom Waterproof Pouch	SLR	240 x 80 x 180	65	PD350 double-polyurethane-coated polyester	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★½	120

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent * Snowflake is the same design as Warthog but also includes external 'snow skirt' — AF-2 also available—features lid buckle *** not including two removable, side-mounted lens pouches † Has an integral waist-belt—no belt loops The country listed after the manufacturer's name is the country in which the products are made

tell me about your mother...

Mont backpacks
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Visualise... comfy couch, up tight psychiatrist drilling you about your mother. Distracted, your thoughts are nowhere near this altitude.

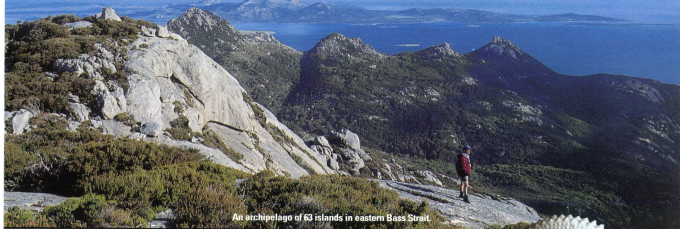
The new Mont backpacks are a significant new direction in harness and compartment design. The revolutionary Delrin™ Rod Technology effectively distributes the load to your hips making lighter work of heavier loads, and cantered bases and convertible lids give you supreme carrying comfort and unrivalled backpack versatility.

sorry...
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island
AIRLINES



Patagonia Torre jacket and pants.
Below, Macpac Endeavour
jacket for women.

Torre Pants feature a 'drop seat' for quick relief during those 'special moments' as well as full-length zips and braces. RRP \$695 and \$595, respectively. The *Gladerunner* (570 grams) is a lightweight jacket made of *Pneumatic* material and intended for active sports such as mountain running. Claimed to be breathable, windproof and water-resistant, the inner lining is treated with a material that is supposed to wick sweat away effectively. RRP \$359. In case you are still feeling chilly, the *Puffball Vest* may be what you need for a little extra warmth. Filled with synthetic Micro-loft fibre, it should dry more quickly than down (and stay warmer when wet). RRP \$175. Available from Patagonia shops.

● A jacket by any other name...

Wild has been informed by New Zealand manufacturer *Macpac* that its clothing now carries the Macpac brand label and is no longer tagged *Wilderness*. (Macpac and Wilderness have been collectively known as *Macpac Wilderness Equipment*.) What's more, Macpac is now using Gore-Tex in some products. With the onset of winter, a number of Macpac's new bushwalking and technical jackets made of Gore-Tex may appeal to you. Teach yourself a trick or two in the *Prophet*—a lightweight (730 grams), two-three-ply, technical Gore-Tex jacket especially suited to alpine climbing. Two other two-three-ply, technical Gore-Tex jackets—the *Astralabe* and the *Endeavour* (the latter is designed specifically for women)—are also said to provide comfort and performance in the most fickle winter weather; both weigh about 800 grams. All three jackets feature a Velcro/zip/press-stud closure. RRP \$499, \$579 and \$579, respectively. The *Olivine*

(740 grams) and *Latitude* (780 grams) are heavy-duty bushwalking jackets with large hip-pockets and a chest storage pocket; the *Latitude* also features a fold-away hood. RRP \$439 and \$479, respectively. (There are also three new Gore-Tex garments in Macpac's range of travel wear—the *Magellane* and *Zanzibar* jackets and the *Ridgeline Pants*.)

There's plenty of protection down below, too—the *Mountain Pants* (high-cut waist) and *Zippos overpants* are designed to protect you when the wind begins to rise. The former (610 grams) is made of three-ply Taslan Gore-Tex material and features Kevlar-reinforced ankle patches, a front chest pocket, braces and zip closures down each leg. The latter (510 grams)—also made of three-ply Gore-Tex material—features a toggle/elastic waistband and reinforcing on the inner calves to resist scuffing. RRP \$429 and \$349, respectively. The *Twilight* (380 grams) is a down-filled vest with fold-away sleeves and is covered with Reflex HiLight material. RRP \$219. All items are available in many outdoor shops.

● Booting along

Italian manufacturer *Scarpa* has added some new trekking and bushwalking boots to its range. The *Brasilia* (1200 grams for size 38)



is a trekking boot in women's fit made from attractive Nubuck leather and featuring a 'Hi-Flex' mid-sole and Skywalk sole—available in (European) sizes 37–42. With a noticeably higher cut ankle, the *Delta* (1500 grams for size 42) may appeal to those who require a little more ankle support. Cambrelle-lined, the *Delta* features a Skywalk sole and is available in sizes 39–47. With a more 'aggressive' sole and a higher rand, the *Manta* (1800 grams for size 42)

may be handy for use in more testing conditions—available in sizes 41–47. RRP \$269, \$279 and \$329, respectively. Available in outdoors shops. (Scarpa has also introduced a new classification to describe some boots in its footwear range—'Travelling'—boots designed for those who, it is said, want good-quality footwear but also wear it 'casually' in less demanding conditions.)

A new range of bushwalking boots in men's- and women's fit from Italian

TRIX

Fuss-free meals and a spiderless face

Two crafty bush hints, by Stephen Buntton

Are you like me—the sort of person whose first night's bushwalking tucker is a frozen, pre-prepared casserole, curry or even some leftovers which you heat on your camp stove and serve with pasta or rice? Preparing a meal or two in the comfort of your own kitchen before you leave is a useful alternative to squeezing another night's worth of uncooked ingredients into your pack and fiddling to perfect a complex culinary delight by torchlight over a small stove.

Many people have learned this trick and carry their first night's meal in a plastic container ranging in design from Tupperware to a yoghurt tub. One problem with this approach, however, is that you have to bring the bulky, dirty container home...and for how many days are you out? I got sick of the inconvenience of 'lugging the empties' but I still like my nice, pre-prepared meal for the first night on my walks. Now when I prepare such a meal, I serve it straight into my Trangia's billy, put it in a plastic bag and freeze the lot. This eliminates all the above problems and I have the added bonus of always getting the quantity just right.

The last thing you want as you march away from camp on a frosty morning is a face full of dewy spider web—potentially complete with spider! To avoid webs in my eyelashes, spluttering them off my lips or extracting them from what's left of my hair I employ a low-technology piece of equipment which is readily available for no cost—the 'spider stick'. It is in fact a humble eucalyptus twig, about 30–40 centimetres long, which I hold vertically in one hand with my forearm reaching out in a horizontal, handshaking position. Alternatively, with a bit of fiddling a suitably shaped twig can be attached to your chest- or shoulder-strap, leaving your hands free. The stick acts like a little snowplough and is very effective.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

It's all in the approach...

S.10 on the Internet:
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It's a Bonnie idea.

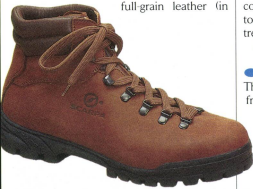
Women have a different shape to men, that's why PETZL have developed the BONNIE harness. To fit women better. The new patented double belay loop allows the rise of the harness to be adjusted for a custom fit. The new wide mesh belt supports the lower back yet allows complete freedom of movement. The channelled thermofoam padding and mesh panels improve air circulation keeping you cool and dry even when the route is hot and hairy. The new style gear loops sweep down toward the front keeping your gear close at hand. The leg loops are sized for women. And it's CE certified. Sizes XS-L. Weighs 350-415gm.

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manufacturer *Tecnica* is now available in Australia. The various designs use materials ranging from a water-resistant Nubuck leather/nylon-mesh combination (such as in the lightweight *Fleet*) to suede/Cordura (in the *Hurricane*) and the generally more durable Cambrelle-lined, full-grain leather (in



Scarpa Brasilia trekking boot. Below, Lago Ultra-Lite headlamp.

the sturdy-looking *Peralba*). Prices vary from RRP \$139 to \$315. Distributed by *Nomad Travel Equipment*, Tecnica boots are available in outdoors shops.

MISCELLANEOUS

● Fill 'er up

A dental emergency in an area far from professional help can be distressing and difficult. Prevention is obviously the best way to reduce the risk of a dental crisis developing and a thorough check-up before going on an extended trip is advisable. However, some dental mishaps—a lost filling, a broken or dislodged crown or tooth—can happen unexpectedly.

Two kits which can provide some form of relief have recently become available. The *Dentist in a Box* (RRP \$33.50; telephone 1800 670 261) comprises basic instructions, a tube of soft (temporary) filling material and a mirror. It also contains items for dealing with dental trauma where a tooth is avulsed (loosened or knocked out). The pictorial instructions, although useful, would benefit from some additional explanatory text. (A leaflet available from the Australian Dental Association would clarify the recommended first aid measures.) Treatment is temporary and in the case of an avulsed tooth professional assistance should be sought as soon as possible.

The *Dentanurse First Aid Kit for Teeth* (RRP \$25.75; phone 1021 9997 7867) comprises basic instructions, temporary cement, a mirror and applicators. It also contains a sterile dental needle which could be handy for applying a local anaesthetic in a region where disposable needles are not routinely used. The cement sets slowly to a hard consistency and can cover a broken tooth or filling or re-cement a crown which has come loose. The material sets hard enough to act as a longer-term, temporary filling

and contains eugenol, which can have a sedative effect on a sensitive tooth.

The Dentist in a Box would be useful when out and about within Australia—where professional help is never too far away—while the Dentanurse kit is better suited for use as an addition to a comprehensive medical kit when venturing to more remote locations (such as when trekking in the Himalayas).

Mike Broadbent (dentist)

● Light headed

The *Ultra-Lite* is a new, lightweight headlamp from French manufacturer *Lago*. Weighing about 85 grams and reportedly giving five hours of continuous light from two AA batteries, the *Ultra-Lite* retails for \$39.95. With a spare bulb included, the light can be adjusted from zoom to spot and is interchangeable from a horizontal to a vertical position. Available from Myer Melbourne and some specialist outdoors shops. Distributed by *Macson Trading*.

● Water, water everywhere...

An addition to the water carrier-type day packs/drinking systems mentioned in Equipment in Wild nos 63 and 64 are the *Hydro Pocket*, *Baja*, and *Arroyo Rig* models



from *Mirage*. Manufactured by US firm *Gregory*, all three models appear to be well made and ideal for light day-walks and for multisport activities. Each possesses a Cordura outer, reflective-tape strip, hip-belt and back mesh pocket. (Of the three models, the *Arroyo Rig*—which most closely resembles a conventional day pack—is the only one which has additional internal storage space.) The *Mesquite* is a far simpler form of drinking system: two drink-bottles mounted in their own pockets on a hip-belt/bum bag (which features a small storage pocket.) RRP \$108, \$152, \$184 and \$76, respectively. These products are distributed by *Outdoor Survival* and are available in outdoors shops.

● Honky tonk

The *Power Zoom Bag* from *Tatonka* is a camera pouch that can accommodate a medium-sized, compact camera. It appears that the pouch will fit comfortably on most rucksack hip-belts (as the belt loop is about 160 millimetres wide) and, indeed, on any chest-harness strap. A late comparison with some of the products included in the Equipment Survey (above) suggests that it would certainly hold its own for bushwalking use. Distributed by *Outdoor Survival*. RRP \$24.

● Safer than houses

The *SafePak*—a new, plastic pouch for such things as money and passports—may also be suited for storing little items such as keys, small maps or even medication while you are walking. It is claimed to be totally waterproof. Available from *East Coast*, phone (02) 9214 7956. RRP \$9.95.

● Burn, baby, burn

Wild recently received two aromatically scented, lightweight fire starters from *Nature's Fire Australia* and *New Zealand*. Claimed to burn hotly for up to 20 minutes when lit, the US-made products consist of cardboard trays filled with wood shavings. These are also claimed to burn 'cleanly', to be environmentally safe and ecologically sound. (Even the plastic in which they are wrapped is said to be made of natural gas and to burn cleanly.) Available in 'flavours' such as Teriyaki, Cajun Spice and Citrus, they will make yours the sweetest-smelling rucksack on the track. Don't sprinkle them in your lentils by mistake. Available directly from the manufacturer, phone (03) 9499 9164. RRP \$3.00 each.

● Light ladder

A new style of ladder designed for caving, canyoning and rescue applications and manufactured by Australian enterprise *Touchstone Climbing Equipment* promises to lighten the load of any haul bag. Made from sewn tape rather than wire (but still with threaded metal rungs), the tape ladder is claimed to weigh just 5.5 kilograms (15 metre length) and be less prone to kinking or other damage than conventional ladders. Furthermore, the 25 millimetre diameter, triple-stitched tape should make the ladder easier to repair and rig in many situations. A 15 metre length costs about \$170. For more information, contact the manufacturer on 019 401 711. ●

This department describes new products which the editorial staff consider will be of interest to readers. The tests they apply for inclusion are whether a product is useful for the rucksack sports, and whether it is fundamentally new (or newly available in Australia). The reports are based on information provided by the manufacturer/distributor. As is the case with all editorial text appearing in *Wild*, publication of material in this department is in no way connected with advertising. Submissions for possible publication are accepted from advertisers and from businesses not advertising in *Wild*, as well as from our readers. (See also the footnote at the end of this department.)

Products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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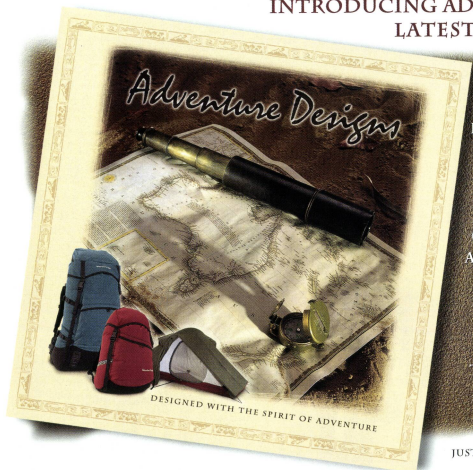
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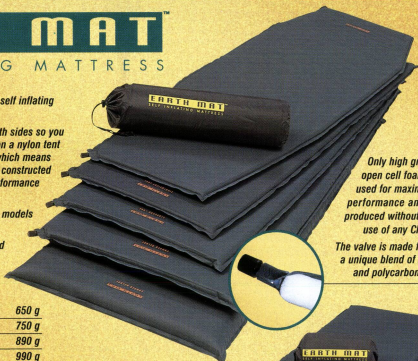
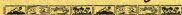
The outer is made from non slip polyester on both sides so you won't slip on your Earth Mat™ and it won't slip on a nylon tent floor either. The fabric dyes used are AZO free which means they don't contain any carcinogens. The inner is constructed from high grade open cell foam for maximum performance and is produced without the use of any CFC's.

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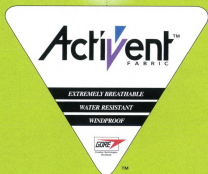


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History and track notes

New South Wales bushwalkers strike it rich

BOOKS

● The First Bushwalker: The Story of Fred Eden

by Jim Barrett (published by the author, 1996, RRP \$12.95).

● Narrow Neck and the Birth of Katoomba

by Jim Barrett (published by the author, 1996, RRP \$11.50).

(Both titles are available at outdoors bookshops and from the author, 65 Brook Rd, Glenbrook, NSW 2773.)

Last year in a review of one of Jim Barrett's books I said that when he completes one he seems to find enough left-over material for another. This time he has produced two interesting volumes. Barrett presumably came across the name of Fred Eden while researching the early history of the Burrigorang valley. He makes a good case for Eden having been the first 'real' bushwalker in the sense of a person who, for recreation, pleasure and from curiosity, went out and explored the bush. Barrett reproduces large parts of Eden's detailed log of an epic walk from Melbourne to Sydney in 1891. This will be of interest to many bushwalkers.

The volume's link to the second book reviewed is a walk by Eden from Parramatta to the Blue Mountains in 1892. In his writings Eden describes venturing from Katoomba on to the Narrow Neck plateau and then descending to the Coffs River. This account is much earlier than any other unearthed so far.

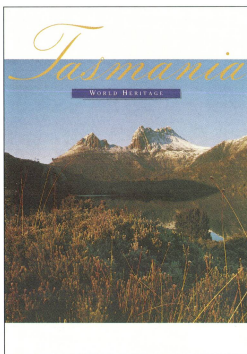
Barrett provides an interesting account of the early mining activities south of Katoomba, of which many fringed Narrow Neck. The middle section of the book deals with the efforts of the pioneer bushwalkers to find a route off Clear Hill—the end of the Neck—including an excellent description of the early explorations by Myles Dunphy and the eventual, successful descent off Clear Hill by Frank Duncan, Ern Austen and Jack Debert in 1928. Barrett then drops his bombshell: he claims that Eden had descended here more than 30 years earlier using a pass established by miners. Although the author presents a strong case and includes long quotes from Eden's log I remain somewhat sceptical.

Part of the book consists of notes describing the Narrow Neck passes. (This

section contains material similar to notes published by Barrett in 1983 in the journal of Sydney's Catholic Bushwalking Club.)

Photographs are among the finest features of all Barrett's books. Again, he has unearthed many classic images showing early Katoomba and the workings associated with the mines and cableways. The author's own photos taken on his many bushwalks into the area in the 1940s and 1950s are equally fascinating.

Both volumes are warmly recommended.
David Noble



● Tasmania: World Heritage

edited by Geoffrey Lea (published by the editor, 1996, RRP \$9.95).

I've never seen a book quite like this one: it is A4 size and contains only 24 pages. But it is a cooperative effort by the cream of Tasmanian wilderness-publishing talent—and that's a strong recommendation when you consider what Tasmanians have given us in this sphere over the last 20 years. Lea, himself a superb wilderness photographer, has coordinated an exceptional team including *Wild* contributor and Special Adviser Geoff Law (who wrote the text) and Peter Dombrovski's pro-

duction manager Rodney Poole. The photographers' credits read like a *Who's Who* of Tasmania's best and include Lea himself, Dombrovski, Chris Bell, Ted Mead and Rob Blakers. The result is the best collection of Tasmanian wilderness photographs I've seen between a pair of covers. And the high standard of reproduction does the photos justice.

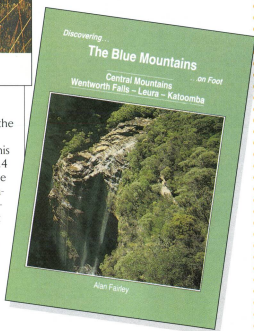
Tasmania: World Heritage seeks to educate large numbers of people about what makes Tasmania's World Heritage Area unique, exquisitely beautiful and worth preserving. It is a spectacular work that should have considerable success in achieving that goal.

Chris Baxter

● Discovering the Blue Mountains on Foot: Central Mountains—Wentworth Falls—Leura—Katoomba

by Alan Fairley (Envirobook, 1996, RRP \$9.95).

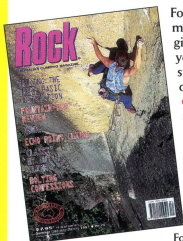
This attractive and compact volume should find its way into the day packs of many visitors to the central parts of the Blue Mountains. The description of each walk begins with a succinct outline of its highlights. There are separate entries on cheap accommodation, geology and land-forms but among the book's strongest features are the botan-



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ical notes within each walk description. The walks featured in this book include many of the best easy day walks in the greater Sydney region. Clear maps and photographs accompany the text.

DN

● **70 Walks in Victoria's Bright and Falls Creek Districts**

by Tyrone Thomas (Hill of Content, 1996, RRP \$179.5).

Thomas has struck again and this time he has produced an excellent book about an area he knows well. This guide follows his well-established format and its small size (184 pages) makes it easy to carry. While the majority of the walks are one day or

Hill has an interesting and very readable style of writing and his latest effort is another good read. This 96-page book has an unfortunate title as it covers only the northern half of the Kosciuszko (see *Wild Information* on page 11) National Park and because it does not include any walks to Mt Jagungal, the Main Range or the Cascades I cannot agree that those described are the best in the park. Still, the 18 one-day walks he has selected are all very good and as they are away from the Main Range most of them are not well known.

The black-and-white sketch maps included for each walk are often difficult to read and to follow. However, Hill has also included a three-dimensional drawing of each walk and while these drawings are not to scale they are excellent at giving a good, overall impression of the walk. If you want to discover some different places for day walks in this fine park, grab a copy of this guide.

JC

● **Walking the Otways: Track Notes compiled by the Geelong Bushwalking Club**

edited by Kaye Potter (Geelong Bushwalking Club, second edition 1996, RRP \$19.95).

The eagerly awaited second edition of this guidebook to the Otway Ranges in southern Victoria has set new standards for local guidebook production. Printed in full colour throughout, the (also full colour) topographic maps, many photos and colour-coded

groups of people—they seem to be up to date and accurate. In places there are some arbitrary assumptions for appropriate start locations and for some place names but these are very minor and should not present problems. The track notes are for one-day walks except for two 'grand tours' which are included in extremely brief notes at the end of the guide. One glaring omission is the lack of any information on overnight walking. There are several regions in the Otway Ranges where camping is discouraged and this should have been mentioned.

The guide covers the entire area included in the previous edition plus new territory to the west of Cape Otway. This is an excellent book and even if you will never walk in the Otways you should get a copy just to see how good a production it is.

JC

● **Bushwalking the Southern Highlands**

by Robert Sloss (Robert Sloss Publications, 1996, RRP \$79.0).

● **Bushwalking the Ensign Barrallier Walk: Katoomba to Mittagong Track**

by Robert Sloss (Robert Sloss Publications, 1996, RRP \$79.0).

In *Bushwalking the Southern Highlands* Robert Sloss provides details of more than 30 day walks in the region that stretches from Fitzroy Falls to Bungonia Gorge and includes the area near Bundanoon, which is attractive for bushwalking. This small book will appeal not only to those who are new to this part of the world but also to walkers looking for fresh places to go. Walks range from short jaunts of less than an hour to more energetic trips which venture into the Shoalhaven Gorge. All the walks are on well-formed tracks and the descriptions are accompanied by quite adequate sketch maps.

In the other volume reviewed, Robert Sloss uses the name 'The Ensign Barrallier Walk' for a route between Katoomba and Mittagong. Bushwalkers have been walking in this country since the pastime began and there are numbers of possible routes between the two towns; many are more interesting than the one described here, which features long sections on roads. But this book provides a good introduction for walkers new to the area. The walk description is quite adequate and gives details of many camp-sites and places to find water. However, the maps are a bit eccentric. The author dispenses with the established convention of having north at the top of each map; they are oriented so that the route runs from the bottom to the top. Also, the history provided in some of the background material needs to be questioned—for example, the 'advent of...television entertainment in 1975'; the Narrow Neck

70 Walks in Victoria's Bright and Falls Creek Districts



TYRONE THOMAS

HILL OF CONTENT

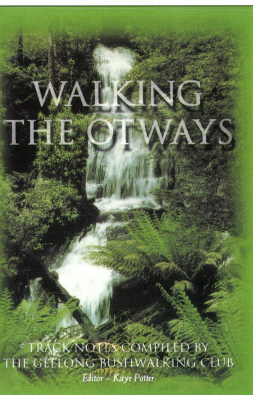
less in length there are 12 overnight walks—some of them to unusual places such as Mt Murray, Mayford and an ascent of Mt Feathertop by way of Champion Spur. As is the case with most books in this series, in reality there are not 70 different walks; many are simply variations of others but the text does not indicate this clearly.

The maps are all monochrome but are adequate and reasonably easy to follow when reading the text. You will still need a topographic map and the majority of readers will use the 1:50 000 *Bogong Alpine Area* map for most walks—the author has recommended the 1:25 000 map series; these are older and haven't any additional information. As it covers the popular walking areas of the Bogong High Plains and surrounds this guide is certain to become another classic and popular book.

John Chapman

● **Best Bushwalks in Kosciuszko National Park**

by Harry Hill (Kangaroo Press, 1996, RRP \$14.95).



headings make for a very professional finish. In fact, the guide almost looks too good to use in the field. (However, it is intended to be used this way and has a spiral binding.)

The track notes have been fully revised from the first edition and while they vary in detail—having been checked by different

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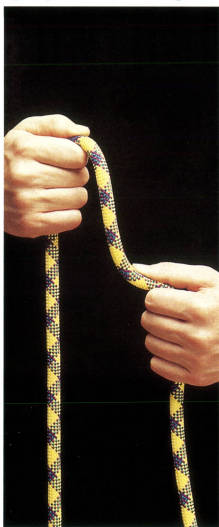
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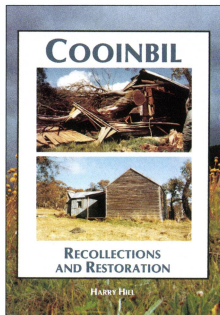
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road 'was constructed in the 1870s' (actually, about 1960); and similar errors. A few mistakes have been made with place names. Duncans Pass is the name of the pass off Narrow Neck; it includes Taros Ladders and is not the name of a route that bypasses them. Axehead Mountain does not get its name from the shape of the mountain. The ridge used as a route out of the Kowmung is referred to here as 'Brumby Spur'; this name does not appear on any official map I could find and may lead it to be confused with the spur going up to Brumby Mountain not far upstream on the other side of the Kowmung River! The gear check-list on the back cover is not really suitable for lightweight walking—it suggests a fuel stove (camp-fires are the norm in the Blue Mountains)—and thermal underpants, waterproof pants and an umbrella could be considered excessive. No wonder the author recommends that additional food be flown in to the halfway point!

DN

● Cooibil Recollections and Restorations

by Harry Hill (published by the author,
1996, RRP \$22.95).



Tumut-based bushwalker Harry Hill did much to establish and publicise the Hume and Hovell walking track. Another of his labours of love has been the restoration of the historic Cooibil Hut on Long Plain north of Kiandra, in the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee River. While taking part in restoration work carried out by the Kosciusko Huts Association, Hill fully documented the endeavour and he also compiled numerous recollections of the pioneers who first used the hut and these recollections make the book valuable. They provide fascinating snapshots of the early part of this century. Anybody interested in the cultural heritage of our High Country huts will appreciate Hill's efforts.

DN

- **The Daintree Coast**
- **Wet Tropics in Profile**
- **Repairing the Rainforest**

all by the Wet Tropics Management Authority (Cassowary Publications, 1996, RRP \$4.00, \$10 and \$10, respectively).

Rainforests are extravagant, flamboyant, chaotic, confusing—in contrast to these books. Though rainforests are their subject, the three books are impeccable examples of how to disseminate information in a proper and orderly manner. The recycled green covers, modest olive photographs and linguistically proper text could have been lifted direct from a style manual.

The Daintree Coast is a simple description of the origin, history, biology and current legal status of the northern coastline of the Wet Tropics—a sort of compilation of helpful National Parks signs. And like such signs it is anonymous.

Author Laurie Trott's name creeps on to the inside page of *Wet Tropics in Profile*, a compact reference to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Many who come to rainforest for the first time find its diversity disorienting—so many lush layers of vegetation between the leafy carpet and the canopy; so many unknown noises and strange life forms. For some this book will be a solace, confining the untidy profusion within neat tables and dot points. Few aspects of the region—biology, history, geography, even politics—are not concisely described. It is a masterly synthesis of the current state of knowledge.

The authors of *Repairing the Rainforest* make the cover. Steve Goosem, a noted rainforest ecologist, and Nigel Tucker, who has been running a rainforest plant nursery for over a decade, between them have accumulated a vast body of knowledge on the ecology of tropical rainforests. Restoration of such a complex ecosystem requires a familiarity with the natural vegetation as well as an understanding of horticultural techniques. The combination of the two provides a synergy that would be lacking from either on its own. The three books are excellent value for money. They are reference works, not coffee-table extravaganzas.

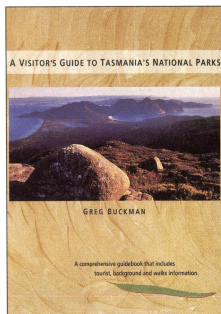
Stephen Garnett

- **A Visitors Guide to Tasmania's National Parks**

by Greg Buckman (Advance Publicity, 1996, RRP \$24.95).

With such a promising title—and a hefty 312 pages—I opened this guide expecting to find lots of walks and information about each park. Instead I found a book that describes access, transport, accommodation, commercial facilities and gives information about history and botany in great detail yet has only limited material on bushwalking. The track notes provided are mainly for very short walks. Much of the information is exactly the same as that found in the free hand-out sheets you can obtain at each park entrance. Fair enough, the book has been designed for tourists travelling by car or bus; the separation of Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair into two parks confirms this.

Even as a tourist book it has some serious omissions. It describes bus access in great detail (including timetables) yet leaves out the largest bus line in the State, Tasmanian Redline Coaches. The accommodation notes are very inconsistent, with some parks having no suggestions while at others the reader is given a wide choice of commercial places at which to stay, all well outside the park. The strengths of this book are the sections on the minor parks where there are no ranger stations or information displays. If you travel around the State by car this guide is handy but if you are going



overnight bushwalking you will learn more that is useful from the many specialist walking guides or even on the internet.

JC

- **Close Encounters With Wildlife In Australia**

by Jim Grant (Gould League of Victoria, 1996, RRP \$14.95).

Knowing just where to go to see particular native animals in the wild is information worth having at your fingertips when your overseas guests arrive.

Close Encounters With Wildlife In Australia is a compact guide to wildlife watching. It provides brief descriptions of some of the commercial and non-commercial faunaspotting activities available around Australia. At the Top End you could go swimming with the whale sharks in the Indian Ocean for \$200–\$300 or, while travelling along the Sturt Highway, for no cost at all you could observe at close quarters the exquisite wedge-tailed eagles grouped around animals killed on the road.

Australia is blessed with unique and beautiful, generally gentle and very trusting fauna. It is the hope of the author that people will gain a greater understanding of our wildlife and its needs through visiting these sites.

The colour photographs throughout the text add interest and some nice design details make the information easily

accessible. Included are location maps, some conservation notes and sources of further information.

This is by no means the definitive resource but all the highlights are there.

Sue Baxter

- **The SAS Survival Flickbook**

by John Wiseman (Harper Collins, 1996, RRP \$14.95).

After 26 years as a survival instructor in the Special Air Service (SAS) John Wiseman is not the sort of fellow I would expect to see tucked up in bed with a glass of hot milk and his favourite Mills and Boon novel. Judging by *The SAS Survival Flickbook* I would be right. Looking like a Swiss Army knife for book lovers, this 'flick' is made up of 56 weatherproof pages that can be opened like a fan. It's a novel concept which works very well. There is a wealth of information here with topics ranging from food, camp craft and navigation to first aid, rescue and survival. It may not be appropriate for a day out in the botanical gardens but I can imagine a whole generation of Scouts turning this into a best seller.

Glenn Tempest

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

- **The Snowy River Explorer**

by George Seddon (Western Interactix, 1996, RRP \$49.95).

Running under Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, this CD-ROM is described as 'An Interactive Journey Down the Snowy River'. The idea is to take you the full length of the Snowy River from Mt Kosciuszko to the sea with the aid of narration, photographs, text and maps. The CD-ROM works well as a slide show or for examining the maps but unfortunately the full power of the software has not been utilised. There is very little direct linking between maps, text and photos and navigation is generally based on text-searching methods. One technique you would expect with software of this type is the ability to select a map location and have the photographs and text presented—this is not possible. The maps are actually black-and-white, aerial photographs which are displayed at a low resolution—features are hard to identify and captions are displayed with a primitive, drop-down menu.

While there are some major shortfalls on the software side overall the CD-ROM is quite interesting, and good for a first effort. The format allows large numbers of photographs to be published which display the area's many moods and regions—something that you could never afford with traditional, print-based publishing. In all there are 327 photographs and 85 maps plus the complete text of a book. With the cost of CD-ROM recorders dropping, this title will give you some idea of the potential this medium has for outdoors publishing. ●

JC

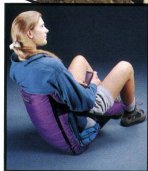
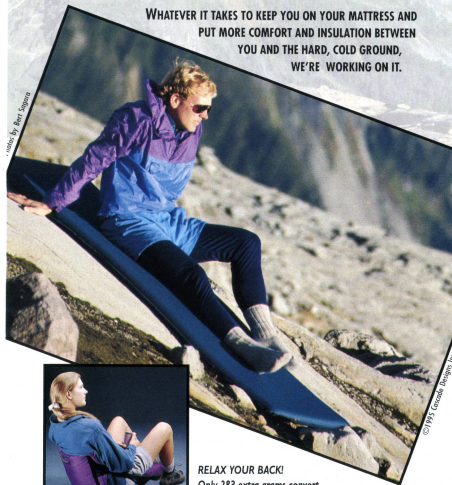
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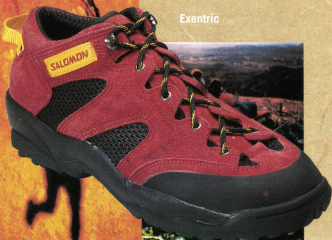
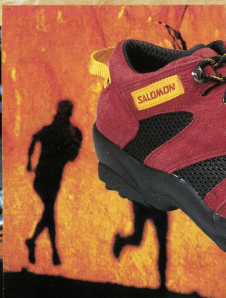
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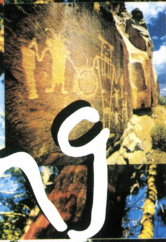
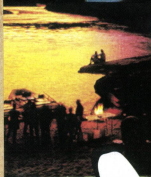
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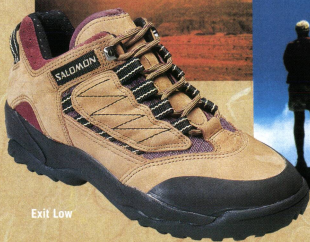
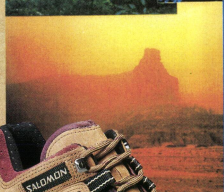


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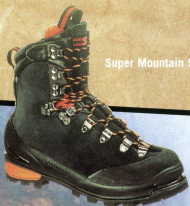
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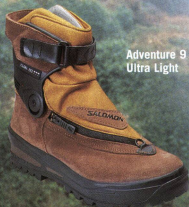
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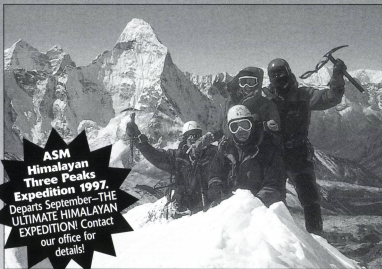
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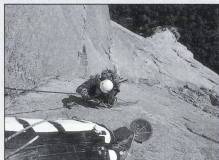
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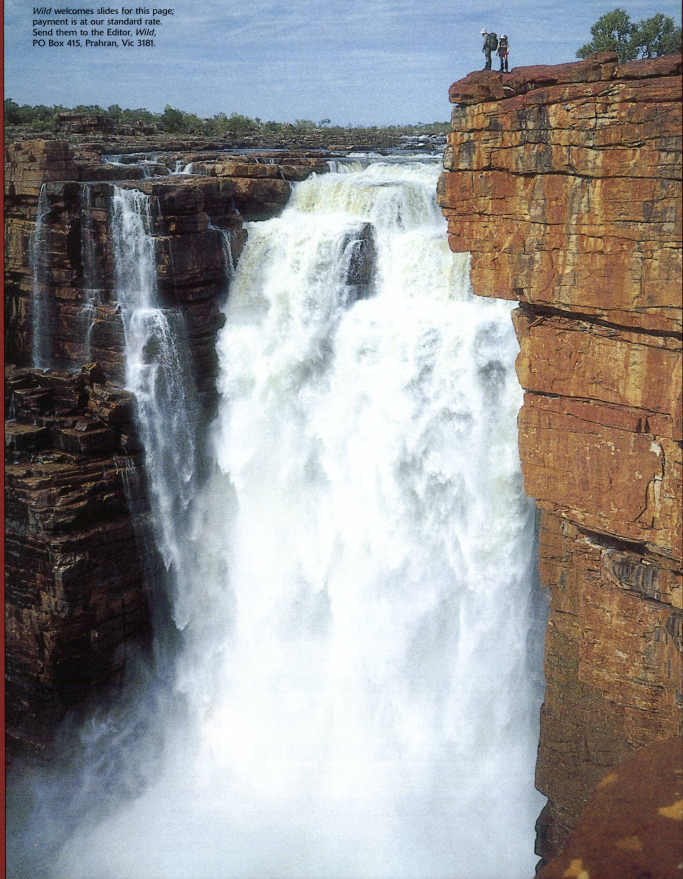


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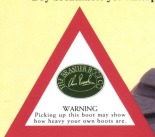
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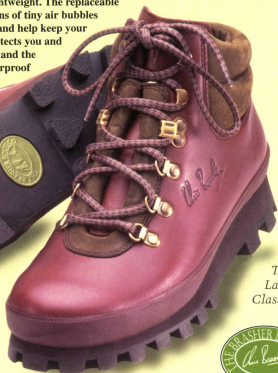
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